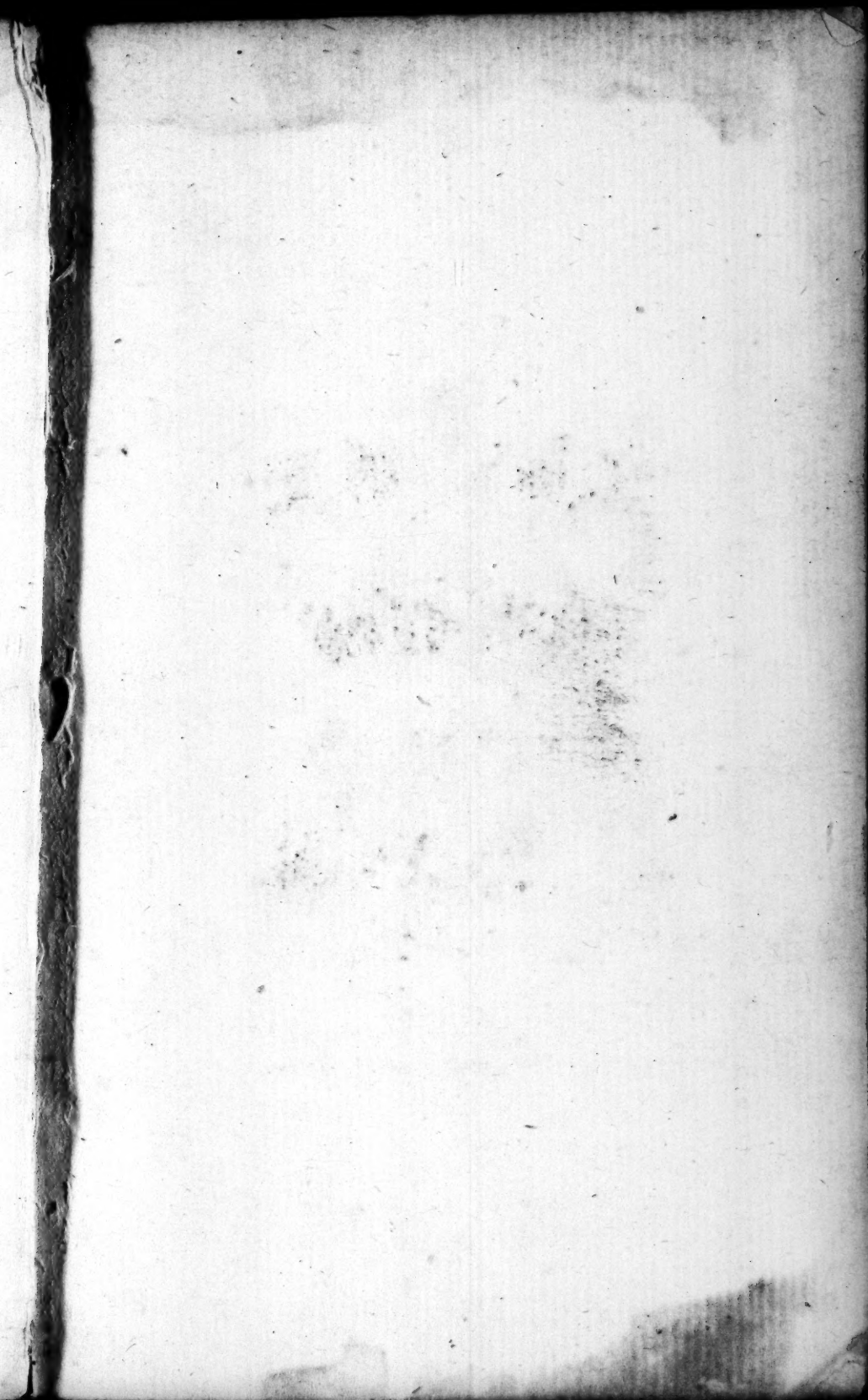




Francis Hastings Toone.



Francis Hastings Toone.



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Elizabeth Gray

SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF MAN.

VOLUME IV.

SKETCHES

Vol. 1. 1847

HISTORY OF MAN

IN FOUR VOLUMES



BY HENRY DE LA BECHE

HISTORY OF MAN

VOLUME IV

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DUBLIN

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MCCCLXXVII

SKETCHES

Eliz. OF THE *Gray*

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By HENRY HOME, Lord KAIMS,
Author of *Elements of Criticism*, &c.

VOLUME IV.

D U B L I N :

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OF THE

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BY HENRY LORD KINGS.

Author of the History of the British Museum.

VOLUME IV.

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MDCCLXXIV.

SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF MAN.

SKETCH II.

Principles and Progress of MORALITY.

THE science of morals, like other sciences, is in a very imperfect state among savages; and arrives at maturity among enlightened nations by very slow degrees. This progress points out the historical part, as first in order: but as that history would give little satisfaction, without a rule for comparing the morals of different ages, and of different nations, I begin with the principles of morality, such as ought to govern at all times, and in all nations. The present sketch accordingly is divided into two parts. In the first, the principles are unfolded; and the second is altogether historical.

P A R T I.

P R I N C I P L E S of M O R A L I T Y.

S E C T. I.

HUMAN ACTIONS *analysed.*

THE hand of God is no where more visible, than in the nice adjustment of our internal frame to our situation in this world. An animal is endued with a power of self-motion; and in performing animal functions, requires not any external aid. This more especially is the case of man, the noblest of terrestrial beings. His heart beats, his blood circulates, his stomach digests, evacuations proceed, &c. &c. By what means? Not surely by the laws of mechanism, which are far from being adequate to such operations. The operations mentioned are effects of an internal power, bestowed on man for preserving life. The

The power is exerted uniformly, and without interruption, independent of will, and without consciousness.

Man is a being susceptible of pleasure and pain : these generate desire to attain what is agreeable, and to shun what is disagreeable ; and he is enabled by other powers to gratify his desires. One power, termed *instinct*, is exerted indeed with consciousness ; but blindly, without will, and without intention to produce any effect. Brute animals act for the most part by instinct : hunger prompts them to eat, and cold, to take shelter ; knowingly indeed, but without exerting any act of will, and without foresight of what will happen. Infants of the human species, little superior to brutes, are, like brutes, governed by instinct : they lay hold of the nipple, without knowing that sucking will satisfy their hunger ; and they weep when pained, without any view of relief*. Another power is governed by intention and will. In the progress from infancy to maturity, the mind opens to objects, without end, of desire and of

* Akin to these, are certain habitual acts done without thought, such as snuffing or grinning. Custom enables one to move the fingers on an instrument of music, without being directed by will : the motion is often too quick for an act of will. Some arrive at great perfection in the art of balancing : the slightest deviation from the just balance is instantly redressed : were a preceding act of will necessary, it would be too late. An unexpected hollow in walking, occasions a violent shock : is not this evidence, that external motion is governed by the mind, frequently without consciousness ; and that in walking, the body is adjusted before-hand to what is expected ?

aversion, the attaining or shunning of which depend more or less on our own will. We are placed in a wide world, left to our own conduct; and we are by nature provided with a proper power for performing what we intend and will. The actions we perform by this power are termed *voluntary*. There still remain another species of actions, termed *involuntary*; as where we act by some irresistible motive against our will. An action may be voluntary, though done with reluctance; as where a man, to free himself from torture, reveals the secrets of his friend: his confession is voluntary, though drawn from him with great reluctance. But let us suppose, that after the firmest resolution to reveal nothing, his mind is unhinged by exquisite torture; the discovery he makes may be justly termed *involuntary*: he speaks indeed; but he is compelled to it absolutely against his will.

Man is by his nature an accountable being, answerable for his conduct to God and man. In doing any action that wears a double face, he is prompted by his nature to explain the same to his relations, his friends, his acquaintance; and above all, to those who have authority over him. He hopes for praise for every right action, and dreads blame for every one that is wrong. But for what sort of actions does he hold himself accountable? Not surely for an instinctive action, which is done blindly, without intention, and without will: neither for an involuntary action, because it is extorted from him against his will: and least of all, for actions done without consciousness, such as those which preserve life. What only remain are voluntary actions, which are either right or wrong. Such actions are done wittingly and willingly: for these we must answer,

swer, if at all accountable ; and for these every man in conscience holds himself bound to answer.

And now more particularly upon voluntary actions. To intend and to will, though commonly held synonymous, signify different acts of the mind. Intention respects the effect : Will respects the action that is exerted for producing the effect. It is my intention, for example, to relieve my friend from distress : upon seeing him, it is my will to give him a sum for his relief : the external act of giving follows ; and my friend is relieved, which is the effect intended. But these internal acts, though in their nature different, are always united : I cannot will the means, without intending the effect ; and I cannot intend the effect, without willing the means*.

Some effects of voluntary action follow necessarily : A wound is an effect that necessarily follows the stabbing a person with a dagger : death is a necessary effect of throwing one down from the battlements of a high tower. Some effects are probable only : I labour in order to provide for my family ; fight for my country to rescue it from oppressors ; take physic for my health. In such cases, the event intended does not necessarily nor always follow.

A man, when he wills to act, must intend the necessary effect : a person who stabs, certainly intends to wound. But where the effect

* To incline, to resolve, to intend, to will, are acts of the mind relative to external action. These several acts are well understood ; though they cannot be defined, being perfectly simple.

is probable only, a man may act without intending the effect that follows: a stone thrown by me at random into the market-place, may happen to wound a man without my intending it. One acts by instinct, without either will or intention: voluntary actions that necessarily produce their effect, imply intention: voluntary actions, when the effect is probable only, are sometimes intended, sometimes not.

Human actions are distinguished from each other by certain *qualities*, termed *right* and *wrong*. But as these make the corner-stone of morality, they are reserved to the following section.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

*Division of Human Actions into RIGHT, WRONG,
and INDIFFERENT.*

THE qualities of right and wrong in voluntary actions, are universally acknowledged as the foundation of morality ; and yet philosophers have been strangely perplexed about them. The history of their various opinions, would signify little but to darken the subject : the reader will have more satisfaction in seeing these qualities explained, without entering at all into controversy.

No person is ignorant of primary and secondary qualities, a distinction much insisted on by philosophers. Primary qualities, such as figure, cohesion, weight, are permanent qualities, that exist in a subject whether perceived or not. Secondary qualities, such as colour, taste, smell, depend on the percipient as much as on the subject, being nothing when not perceived. Beauty and ugliness are qualities of the latter sort : they have no existence but when perceived ; and, like all other secondary qualities, they are perceived intuitively ; having no dependence on reason nor

on judgment, more than colour has, or smell, or taste (a).

The qualities of right and wrong in voluntary actions, are secondary, like beauty and ugliness, and the other secondary qualities mentioned. Like them, they are objects of intuitive perception, and depend not in any degree on reason or on judgment. No argument is requisite to prove, that to rescue an innocent babe from the jaws of a wolf, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, are right actions: they are perceived to be so intuitively. As little is an argument requisite to prove, that murder, deceit, perjury, are wrong actions: they are perceived intuitively to be so. The Deity has bestowed on man, different faculties for different purposes. Truth and falsehood are investigated by the reasoning faculty. Beauty and ugliness are objects of a sense, known by the name of *taste*. Right and wrong are objects of a sense termed the *moral sense* or *conscience*. And supposing these qualities to be hid from our perception, in vain would we try to discover them by any argument, or process of reasoning: the attempt would be absurd; no less so than an attempt to discover colour, by reasoning, or taste, or smell *.

Right

(a) Elements of Criticism, vol. 1. p. 207. edit. 5.

* Every perception must proceed from some faculty or power of perception, termed *sense*. The moral sense, by which we perceive the qualities of right and wrong, may be considered either as a branch of the sense of seeing, by which we perceive the actions to which these qualities belong, or as a sense distinct from all others. The senses by which objects are perceived, are not separated from each other by distinct boundaries; and the sorting or classing them, seems to depend more

Right and wrong, as mentioned above, are qualities of voluntary actions, and of no other kind. An instinctive action is beneficial, is agreeable: but it cannot properly be denominated either right or wrong. An involuntary act is hurtful to the agent, and disagreeable to the spectator; but in the agent it is neither right nor wrong. These qualities also depend in no degree on the event. Thus, if, to save my friend from drowning, I plunge into a river, the action is right, though I happen to come too late. And if I aim a stroke at a man behind his back, the action is wrong, though I happen not to touch him.

The qualities of right and of agreeable, are inseparable; and so are the qualities of wrong and of disagreeable. A right action, accordingly, is agreeable, not only in the direct perception, but equally so in every subsequent recollection. And in both circumstances equally, a wrong action is disagreeable.

Right actions are distinguished by the moral sense into two kinds, viz. what *ought* to be done, and what *may* be done, or left undone. Wrong actions admit not that distinction: they are all prohibited to be done. To say that an action ought to be done, means that we are tied or obliged to perform; and to say that an action ought not to be done, means that we are restrained from doing it. Though the necessity implied in the being tied or obliged, is not physical, but

more on taste and fancy, than on nature. I have followed the plan laid down by former writers; which is, to consider the moral sense as a sense distinct from others, because it is the easiest and clearest manner of conceiving it.

only what is commonly termed *moral*; yet we conceive ourselves deprived of liberty or freedom, and necessarily bound to act or to forbear acting, in opposition to every other motive. The necessity here described is termed *duty*. The moral necessity we are under to forbear harming the innocent, is a proper example: the moral sense declares the restraint to be our duty, which no motive whatever will excuse us for transgressing.

The duty of performing or forbearing any action, implies a *right* in some person to exact performance of that duty; and accordingly, a duty or obligation necessarily infers a corresponding right. A promise on my part to pay L. 100, confers a right to demand performance. The man who commits an injury, violates the *right* of the person injured, which entitles him to demand reparation of the wrong.

Duty is twofold; duty to others, and duty to ourselves. With respect to the former, the doing what we ought to do, is termed *just*: the doing what we ought not to do, and the omitting what we ought to do, are termed *unjust*. With respect to ourselves, the doing what we ought to do, is termed *proper*: the doing what we ought not to do, and the omitting what we ought to do, are termed *improper*. Thus, *right*, signifying a quality of certain actions, is a genus; of which *just* and *proper* are species: *wrong*, signifying a quality of other actions, is a genus; of which *unjust* and *improper* are species.

Right actions left to our free will, to be done, or left undone, come next in order. They are, like the former, right when done; but they differ, in not being wrong when left undone. To remit a just debt for the sake of a growing family, to yield a subject in controversy rather than go to law with a neighbour, generously to return
good

good for ill, are examples of this species. They are universally approved as right actions: but as no person has a right or title to oblige us to perform such actions, the leaving them undone is not a wrong: no person is injured by the forbearance. Actions that come under this class, shall be termed *arbitrary*, for want of a more proper designation.

So much for right actions, and their divisions. Wrong actions are of two kinds, *criminal* and *culpable*. What are done intentionally to produce mischief, are criminal: such rash or unguarded actions as produce mischief without intention, are culpable. The former are restrained by punishment, to be handled in the 5th section; the latter by reparation, to be handled in the 6th.

The divisions of voluntary actions are not yet exhausted. Some there are that, properly speaking, cannot be denominated either right or wrong. Actions done merely for amusement or pastime, without intention to produce good or ill, are of that kind; leaping, for example, running, jumping over a stick, throwing a stone to make circles in the water. Such actions are neither approved nor disapproved: they may be termed *indifferent*.

There is no cause for doubting the existence of the moral sense, more than for doubting the existence of the sense of beauty, of seeing, or of hearing. In fact, the perception of right and wrong as qualities of actions, is no less distinct and clear, than that of beauty, of colour, or of any other quality; and as every perception is an act of sense, the sense of beauty is not with greater certainty evinced from the perception of beauty, than the moral sense is from the perception of right and wrong. We find this sense distributed among individuals in different degrees of perfection: but there perhaps never existed any one
above

above the condition of an idiot, who possessed it not in some degree ; and were any man intirely destitute of it, the terms *right* and *wrong* would be to him no less unintelligible, than the term colour is to one born blind.

That every individual is endued with a sense of right and wrong, more or less distinct, will probably be granted ; but whether there be among men what may be termed a *common sense* of right and wrong, producing uniformity of opinion as to right and wrong, is not so evident. There is no absurdity in supposing the opinions of men about right and wrong, to be as various as about beauty and deformity : and that this supposition is not destitute of foundation, we are led to suspect, upon discovering that in different countries, and even in the same country at different times, the opinions publicly espoused with regard to right and wrong, are extremely various ; that among some nations it was held lawful for a man to sell his children for slaves, and in their infancy to abandon them to wild beasts ; that it was held equally lawful to punish children, even capitally, for the crime of their parent ; that the murdering an enemy in cold blood, was once a common practice ; that human sacrifices, impious no less than immoral according to our notions, were of old universal ; that even in later times, it has been held meritorious, to inflict cruel torments for the slightest deviations from the religious creed of the plurality ; and that among the most enlightened nations, there are considerable differences with respect to the rules of morality.

These facts tend not to disprove the reality of a common sense in morals : they only prove, that the moral sense has not been equally perfect at all times, nor in all countries. This branch of the history of morality, is reserved for the second part.

part. To give some present satisfaction, I shall shortly observe, that the savage state is the infancy of man; during which, the more delicate senses lie dormant, leaving nations to the authority of custom, of imitation, and of passion, without any just taste of morals more than of the fine arts: but nations, like individuals, ripen gradually, and acquire a refined taste in morals as well as in the fine arts: after which we find great uniformity of opinion about the rules of right and wrong; with few exceptions, but what may proceed from imbecility, or corrupted education. There may be found, it is true, even in the most enlightened ages, men who have singular notions of morality; and there may be found the like singularity upon many other subjects: which no more affords an argument against a common sense or standard of right and wrong, than a monster doth against the standard that regulates our external form, or than an exception doth against the truth of a general proposition.

That there is in mankind an uniformity of opinion with respect to right and wrong, is a matter of fact of which the only infallible evidence is observation and experience: and to that evidence I appeal; entering only a caveat, that, for the reason above given, the enquiry be confined to enlightened nations. In the mean time, I take liberty to suggest an argument from analogy, That if there be great uniformity among the different tribes of men in seeing and hearing, in pleasure and pain, in judging of truth and error, the same uniformity ought to hold with respect to right and wrong. Whatever minute differences there may be to distinguish one person from another, yet in the general principles that constitute our nature, internal and external, there is wonderful uniformity.

This

This uniformity of sentiment, which may be termed *the common sense of mankind with respect to right and wrong*, is essential to social beings. Did the moral sentiments of men differ as much as their faces, they would be altogether unqualified for society: discord and controversy would be endless, and *major vis* would be the only rule of *meum et tuum*.

But such uniformity of sentiment, though general, is not altogether universal: men there are, as above mentioned, who differ from the common sense of mankind with respect to various points of morality. What ought to be the conduct of such men? ought they to regulate their conduct by that standard, or by their private conviction? There will be occasion afterward to observe, that we judge of others as we believe they judge of themselves; and that private conviction is the standard for rewards and punishments (a). But with respect to every controversy about property and pecuniary interest, and, in general, about every civil right and obligation, the common sense of mankind is the standard, and not private conviction or conscience; which I shall endeavour to make out as follows.

We have an innate sense of a common nature, not only in our own species, but in every species of animals. And that the fact corresponds to our sense of it, is verified by experience; for there appears a remarkable uniformity in creatures of the same kind, and a difformity, no less remarkable, in creatures of a different kind. As that common nature is perceived to be a model or standard for each individual of the kind, it raises wonder to find an individual deviating from the common nature of the species, whether in its in-

ternal or external structure: a child born with aversion to its mother's milk, is a wonder, no less than if born without a mouth, or with more than one.

Secondly, The innate sense mentioned dictates, that the common nature of man in particular, is invariable as well as universal; that it will be the same hereafter as it is at present, and as it was in time past, the same among all nations, and in all corners of the earth: nor are we deceived; because, allowing for slight differences occasioned by culture and other accidental circumstances, the fact corresponds to our perception.

Thirdly, We perceive that this common nature is *right* and *perfect*, and that it *ought* to be a model or standard for every human being. Any remarkable deviation from it in the structure of an individual, appears imperfect or irregular; and raises a painful emotion: a monstrous birth, exciting curiosity in philosophers, fails not at the same time to excite aversion in every spectator.

This sense of perfection in the common nature of man, comprehends every branch of his nature, and particularly the common sense of mankind with respect to right and wrong; which accordingly is perceived by all to be perfect, having authority over all men as the ultimate and unerring standard of morals, even in contradiction to private conviction. Thus, a law in our nature binds us to regulate our conduct by that standard: its authority is universally acknowledged, as nothing is more common in every dispute about *meum et tuum*, than an appeal to it as the ultimate and unerring standard.

At the same time, as that standard through infirmity or prejudice, is not conspicuous to every individual, many are misled into erroneous opinions, by mistaking a false standard for that of nature.

nature. And hence a distinction between a right and a wrong sense in morals; a distinction which every one understands, but which, unless for the conviction of a moral standard, would be altogether unintelligible.

The final cause of this branch of our nature is conspicuous. Were there no standard of right and wrong for determining endless controversies about matters of interest, the strong would have recourse to force, the weak to cunning, and society would be intolerable. Courts of law could afford no remedy; for without a standard of morals, their decisions would be arbitrary, and of no authority. Happy it is for men to be provided with such a standard: it is necessary in society that our actions be uniform with respect to right and wrong; and in order to uniformity of action, it is necessary that our perceptions of right and wrong be also uniform: to produce such uniformity, a standard of morals is indispensable. Nature has provided us with that standard, which is daily applied by courts of law with success.

In reviewing what is said, it must afford great satisfaction, to find morality established upon the most solid of all foundations, viz. intuitive perception, which is not only a single mental act, but is complete in itself, having no dependence on any antecedent proposition. The most accurate reasoning affords not equal conviction; for every sort of reasoning, as explained in the sketch immediately foregoing, requires not only self-evident truths or axioms to found upon, but employs over and above various propositions to bring out its conclusions. By intuitive perception solely, without reasoning, we acquire knowledge of right and wrong; of what we may do, of what we ought to do, and of what we ought to

to abstain from: and considering that we have thus greater certainty of moral laws, than of any proposition discoverable by reasoning, man may well be deemed a favourite of heaven, when he is so admirably qualified for acting the part that is agreeable to his Maker. The moral sense or conscience is the voice of God within us; constantly admonishing us of our duty, and requiring from us no exercise of our faculties but attention merely. The celebrated Locke ventured what he thought a bold conjecture, That moral duties might be susceptible of demonstration: how agreeable would the discovery have been to him, that they are founded upon intuitive perception, still more convincing and authoritative!

By one branch of the moral sense, we are taught what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do; and by another branch, what we may do, or leave undone. But society would be imperfect, if the moral sense stopped here. There is no particular that tends more to complete society, than what is mentioned in the first section, viz. That every man is accountable for his conduct to his fellow-creatures; and he is rendered accountable by a third branch of the moral sense, which teaches him, that this is his duty. And it will be made evident afterward, in the 3d sketch, that we are accountable to our Maker, as well as to our fellow-creatures.

To complete this theory, I add, that an action is right or wrong, independent of the actor's own opinion. Thus, when a man, excited by friendship or pity, rescues a heretic from the flames, the action is right, even though he think it wrong, from a conviction that heretics ought to be burnt. But we apply a different rule to those who act: a man is approved, and held to be innocent, when he does what he him-
self

self thinks right ; he is disapproved, and held to be guilty, when he does what he himself thinks wrong. Thus, to assassinate an atheist for the sake of religion, is a wrong action ; and yet the enthusiast who commits that wrong, may be innocent : and one is guilty who, against conscience, eats meat in lent, though the action is not wrong. In short, an action is perceived to be right or wrong, independent of the actor's own opinion : but he is approved or disapproved, held to be innocent or guilty, according to his own opinion.

S E C T. III.

Laws of Nature respecting our MORAL CONDUCT IN SOCIETY.

A Standard being thus established for regulating our moral conduct in society, we proceed to investigate the laws that result from it. But first we take under consideration, what other principles concur with the moral sense to qualify men for society.

When

When we reflect on the different branches of human knowledge, it might seem, that of all subjects human nature should be the best understood ; because every man has daily opportunities to study it, in his own passions and in his own actions. But human nature, an interesting subject, is seldom left to the investigation of philosophy. Writers of a sweet disposition and warm imagination hold, that man is a benevolent being, and that every man ought to direct his conduct for the good of all, without regarding himself but as one of the number (*a*). Those of a cold temperament, and contracted mind, hold him to be an animal entirely selfish ; to evince which, examples are accumulated without end (*b*). Neither of these systems is that of nature. The selfish system is contradicted by the experience of all ages, affording the clearest evidence, that men frequently act for the sake of others, without regarding themselves, and sometimes in direct opposition to their own interest. And however much selfishness may prevail in action, it certainly prevails not in sentiment and affection : all men conspire to put a high estimation upon generosity, benevolence and other social virtues ; while even the most selfish are disgusted with selfishness in others, and endeavour to hide it in themselves. The most zealous patron of the selfish principle will not venture to maintain, that it renders us altogether indifferent about our fellow-creatures. Laying aside self-interest, with every connection of love and hatred, good fortune happening to any one is agree-

(*a*) Lord Shaftesbury.

(*b*) Helvetius,

able to all, and bad fortune happening to any one is disagreeable to all. On the other hand, the system of universal benevolence, is no less contradictory to experience: from which we learn, that men commonly are disposed to prefer their own interest before that of others, especially where there is no strict connection: nor do we find that such bias is opposed by the moral sense. Man in fact is a complex being, composed of principles, some benevolent, some selfish: and these principles are so justly blended in his nature, as to fit him for acting a proper part in society. It would indeed be losing time to prove, that without some affection for his fellow-creatures he would be ill qualified for society. And it will be made evident afterward (a), that universal benevolence would be more hurtful to society, than even absolute selfishness*.

We are now prepared for investigating the laws that result from the foregoing principles. The several duties we owe to others shall be first

(a) Sect. 4.

* “ Many moralists enter so deeply into one passion
 “ or bias of human nature, that, to use the painter’s
 “ phrase, they quite overcharge it. Thus I have
 “ seen a whole system of morals founded upon a single
 “ pillar of the inward frame; and the entire conduct
 “ of life, and all the characters in it, accounted for,
 “ sometimes from superstition, sometimes from pride,
 “ and most commonly from interest. They forget
 “ how various a creature it is they are painting; how
 “ many springs and weights, nicely adjusted and balanced,
 “ enter into the movement, and require allowance to be made for their several clogs and impulses,
 “ ere you can define its operation and defects.” *Enquiry into the life and writings of Homer.*

discussed,

discussed, taking them in order, according to the extent of their influence. And for the sake of perspicuity, I shall first present them in a general view, and then proceed to particulars. Of our duties to others, one there is so extensive, as to have for its object all the innocent part of mankind. It is the duty that prohibits us to hurt others : than which no law is more clearly dictated by the moral sense ; nor is the transgression of any other law more deeply stamped with the character of wrong. A man may be hurt externally in his goods, in his person, in his relations, and in his reputation. Hence the laws, Do not steal ; Defraud not others ; Do not kill nor wound ; Be not guilty of defamation. A man may be hurt internally, by an action that occasions to him distress of mind, or by being impressed with false notions of men and things. Therefore conscience dictates, that we ought not to treat men disrespectfully ; that we ought not causelessly to alienate their affections from others ; and, in general, that we ought to forbear whatever may tend to break their peace of mind, or tend to unqualify them for being good men, and good citizens.

The duties mentioned are duties of restraint. Our active duties regard particular persons ; such as our relations, our friends, our benefactors, our masters, our servants. It is our duty to honour and obey our parents ; and to establish our children in the world with all advantages internal and external : we ought to be faithful to our friends, grateful to our benefactors, submissive to our masters, kind to our servants, and to aid and comfort every one of these persons when in distress. To be obliged to do good to others beyond these bounds, must depend on positive

sitive engagement ; for, as will appear afterward, universal benevolence is not a duty.

This general sketch will prepare us for particulars. The duty of restraint comes first in view, that which bars us from harming the innocent ; and to it corresponds a right in the innocent to be safe from harm. This is the great law preparatory to society ; because without it, society could never have existed. Here the moral sense is inflexible : it dictates, that we ought to submit to any distress, even death itself, rather than procure our own safety by laying violent hands upon an innocent person. And we are under the same restraint with respect to the property of another ; for robbery and theft are never upon any pretext indulged. It is indeed true, that in extreme hunger I may lawfully take food where it can be found ; and may freely lay hold of my neighbour's horse, to carry me from an enemy who threatens death. But it is his duty as a fellow creature to assist me in distress ; and when there is no time for delay, I may lawfully use what he ought to offer were he present, and what I may presume he would offer. For the same reason, if in a storm my ship be driven among the anchor-ropes of another ship, I may lawfully cut the ropes in order to get free. But in every case of this kind, it would be a wrong in me to use my neighbour's property, without resolving to pay the value. If my neighbour be bound to aid me in distress, conscience binds me to make up his loss *.

The

* This doctrine is obviously founded on justice ; and yet, in the Roman law, there are two passages which deny any recompence in such cases. " Item Labeo " scribit, si cum vi ventorum navis impulsâ esset in
" funes

The prohibition of hurting others internally, is perhaps not essential to the formation of societies, because the transgression of that law doth

“ funes anchorarum alterius, et nautæ funes præci-
 “ dissent ; si nullo alio modo, nisi præcisis funibus,
 “ explicare se potuit, nullam actionem dandam ;” *l.*
 29. § 3. *ad leg. Aquil.* “ Quod dicitur *damnum in-*
 “ *juria datum Aquilia persequi*, sic erit accipiendum,
 “ ut videatur *damnum injuria datum* quod cum *dam-*
 “ *no injuriam attulerit* ; nisi magna vi cogente, fuerit
 “ factum. Ut Celsus scribit circa eum, qui incendii
 “ arcendi gratia vicinas ædes intercidit : et si ve
 “ venit ignis, si ve ante extinctus est, existimat legis
 “ Aquiliæ actionem cessare.” *l.* 49. § 1. *eod.* — [*In*
English thus : “ In the opinion of Labeo, if a ship is
 “ driven by the violence of a tempest among the an-
 “ chor-ropes of another ship, and the sailors cut the
 “ ropes, having no other means of getting free, there
 “ is no action competent.—The Aquilian law must
 “ be understood to apply only to such damage as car-
 “ ries the idea of an injury along with it, unless such
 “ injury has not been wilfully done, but from necessi-
 “ ty. Thus Celsus puts the case of a person who, to
 “ stop the progress of a fire, pulls down his neigh-
 “ bour’s house ; and whether the fire had reached
 “ that house which is pulled down, or was extinguish-
 “ ed before it got to it, in neither case, he thinks,
 “ will an action be competent from the Aquilian
 “ law.”]—These opinions are undoubtedly errone-
 ous. And it is not difficult to say what has occasioned
 the error : the cases mentioned are treated as belong-
 ing to the *lex Aquilia* ; which being confined to the
 reparation of wrongs, lays it justly down for a rule,
 That no action for reparation can lie, where there is
 no *culpa*. But had Labeo and Celsus adverted, that
 these cases belong to a different head, viz. the duty
 of recompense, where one suffers loss by benefitting
 another, they themselves would have had no difficulty
 of sustaining a claim for making up that loss.

not much alarm plain people : but where manners and refined sentiments prevail, the mind is susceptible of more grievous wounds than the body ; and therefore, without that law, a polished society could have no long endurance.

By adultery, mischief is done both external and internal. Each sex is so constituted, as to require strict fidelity and attachment in a mate : and the breach of these duties is the greatest external harm that can befall them : it harms them also internally, by breaking their peace of mind. It has indeed been urged, that no harm will ensue, if the adultery be kept secret ; and consequently, that there can be no crime where there is no discovery. But such as reason thus do not advert, that to declare secret adultery to be lawful, is in effect to overturn every foundation of mutual trust and fidelity in the married state. It is clear beyond all doubt, says a reputable writer, that no man is permitted to violate his faith ; and that the man is unjust and barbarous who deprives his wife of the only reward she has for adhering to the austere duties of her sex. But an unfaithful wife is still more criminal, by dissolving the whole ties of nature : in giving to her husband children that are not his, she betrays both, and joins perfidy to infidelity (*a*).

Veracity is commonly ranked among the active duties ; but erroneously : for if a man be not bound to speak, he cannot be bound to speak truth. It is therefore only a restraining duty, prohibiting us to deceive others, by affirming what is not true. Among the many corresponding principles in the human mind that in conjunction tend to make society comfortable, a prin-

(*a*) *Emile*, liv. 5.

ciple of veracity *, and a principle that leads us to rely on human testimony, are two : without the latter, the former would be an useless principle ; and without the former, the latter would lay us open to fraud and treachery. The moral sense accordingly dictates, that we ought to adhere strictly to truth, without regard to consequences.

It must not be inferred, that we are bound to explain our thoughts, when truth is demanded from us by unlawful means. Words uttered voluntarily, are naturally relied on, as expressing the speaker's mind ; and if his mind differ from his words, he tells a lie, and is guilty of deceit. But words drawn from a man by torture, are no indication of his mind ; and he is not guilty of deceit in uttering whatever words may be agreeable, however alien from his thoughts : if the author of the unlawful violence suffer himself to be deceived, he ought to blame himself, not the speaker.

It need scarce be mentioned, that the duty of veracity excludes not fable, nor any liberty of speech intended for amusement solely.

* Truth is always uppermost, being the natural issue of the mind : it requires no art nor training, no inducement nor temptation, but only that we yield to natural impulse. Lying, on the contrary, is doing violence to our nature ; and is never practised, even by the worst of men, without some temptation. Speaking truth is like using our natural food, which we would do from appetite although it answered no end : lying is like taking physic, which is nauseous to the taste, and which no man takes but for some end which he cannot otherwise attain. *Dr. Reid's Enquiry into the human mind.*

Active duties, as hinted above, are all of them directed to particular persons. And the first I shall mention is, that which subsists between a parent and child. The relation of parent and child, the strongest that can exist between individuals, binds these persons to exert their utmost powers in mutual good offices. Benevolence among other blood-relations, is also a duty; but not so indispensable, being proportioned to the inferior degree of relation.

Gratitude is a duty directed to the person who has been kind to us. But though gratitude is strictly a duty, the measure of performance, and the kind, are left mostly to our own choice. It is scarce necessary to add, that the active duties now mentioned, are acknowledged by all to be absolutely inflexible, perhaps more so than the restraining duties: many find excuses for doing harm; but no one hears with patience an excuse for deviating from truth, friendship, or gratitude.

Distress tends to convert benevolence into a duty. But distress alone is not sufficient, without other concurring circumstances: for to relieve every person in distress, is beyond the power of any human being. Our relations in distress claim that duty from us, and even our neighbours: but distant distress, without a particular connection, scarce rouses our sympathy, and never is an object of duty. Many other connections, too numerous for this short essay, extend the duty of relieving others from distress; and these make a large branch of equity. Though in various instances, benevolence is thus converted into a duty by distress, it follows not, that the duty is always proportioned to the degree of distress. Nature has more wisely provided for the support of virtue. A virtuous person in distress commands our

our pity : a vicious person in distress has much less influence ; and if by vice he have brought on the distress, indignation is raised, not pity (a).

One great advantage of society, is the co-operation of many to accomplish some useful work, where a single hand would be insufficient. Arts, manufactures, and commercial dealings, require many hands : but as hands cannot be secured without a previous engagement, the performance of promises and covenants, is, upon that account, a capital duty in society. In their original occupations of hunting and fishing, men living scattered and dispersed, have seldom opportunity to aid and benefit each other ; and in that situation, covenants being of little use, are little regarded : but husbandry requiring the co-operation of many hands, draws men together for mutual assistance ; and then covenants make a figure : arts and commerce make them more and more necessary ; and in a polished society great regard is paid to them.

But contracts and promises are not confined to commercial dealings : they serve also to make benevolence a duty ; and are even extended to connect the living with the dead : a man would die with regret, if he thought his friends were not bound by their promises, to fulfil his will after his death : and to quiet the minds of men with respect to futurity, the moral sense makes the performing such promises our duty. Thus, if I promise to my friend to erect a monument for him after his death, conscience binds me, even though

(a) See Elements of Criticism, vol. 1. p. 187. edit. 5.

no person alive be entitled to demand performance : every one perceives this to be my duty ; and I must expect to suffer reproach and blame, if I neglect my engagement.

To fulfil a rational promise or covenant, deliberately made, is a duty no less inflexible than those duties are which arise independent of consent. But as man is fallible, often misled by ignorance or error, and liable to be deceived, his condition would be deplorable, did the moral sense compel him to fulfil every engagement, however imprudent or irrational. Here the moral sense gives way to human infirmity : it relieves from deceit, from imposition, from ignorance, from error ; and binds a man by no engagement but what answers the end fairly intended.

The other branch of duties, viz. those we owe to ourselves, shall be discussed in a few words. *Propriety*, a branch of the moral sense, regulates our conduct with respect to ourselves ; as *Justice*, another branch of the moral sense, regulates our conduct with respect to others. Propriety dictates, that we ought to act up to the dignity of our nature, and to the station allotted us by Providence : it dictates in particular, that temperance, prudence, modesty, and uniformity of conduct, are self duties. These duties contribute to private happiness, by preserving health, peace of mind, and self-esteem ; which are inestimable blessings : they contribute no less to happiness in society, by gaining the love and esteem of others, and aid and support in time of need.

Upon reviewing the foregoing duties respecting others, we find them more or less extensive ; but none so extensive as to have for their end the good of mankind in general. The most extensive duty is that of restraint, prohibiting us to harm others : but even that duty has a limited end ;

end ; for its purpose is only to protect others from mischief, not to do them any positive good. The active duties of doing positive good are circumscribed within still narrower bounds, requiring some relation that connects us with others ; such as those of parent, child, friend, benefactor. The slighter relations, unless in peculiar circumstances, are not the foundation of any active duty : neighbourhood, for example, does not alone make benevolence a duty : but supposing a neighbour to be in distress, it becomes our duty to relieve him, if it can be done without distress to ourselves. The duty of relieving from distress, seldom goes farther ; for though we always sympathise with our relations, and with those under our eye, the distress of persons remote and unknown affects us very little. Pactions and agreements become necessary, if we would extend the duty of benevolence, in any particular, beyond the limits mentioned. Men, it is true, are capable of doing more good than is required of them as a duty ; but every such good must be a free-will offering.

And this leads to arbitrary actions, viz. those that may be done or left undone ; which make the second general head of moral actions. With respect to these, the moral sense leaves us at freedom : a benevolent act is approved, but the omission is not condemned. This holds strictly in single acts ; but in viewing the whole of a man's conduct, the moral sense appears to vary a little. As the nature of man is complex, partly social, partly selfish, we have an intuitive perception, that our conduct ought to be conformable to our nature ; and that in advancing our own interest, we ought not altogether to neglect that of others. The man accordingly who confines his whole time and thoughts within his

own little sphere, is condemned by all the world as guilty of wrong conduct; and the man himself, if his moral perceptions be not blunted by selfishness, must be sensible that he deserves to be condemned. On the other hand, it is possible that free benevolence may be extended beyond proper bounds. The just temperament is a subordination of benevolence to self-love: but where benevolence prevails, it commonly leads to excess, by prompting a man to sacrifice a great interest of his own to a small interest of others; and the moral sense dictates, that such conduct is wrong.

Thus, moral actions are divided into two classes: the first regards our duty, containing actions that ought to be done, and actions that ought not to be done; the other regards arbitrary actions, containing actions that are right when done, but not wrong when left undone. The well-being of society depends more on the first class than on the second: society is indeed promoted by the latter: but it can scarce subsist, unless the former be made our duty. Hence it is, that actions only of the first class are made indispensable; those of the other class being left to our free-will. And hence also it is, that the various propensities that dispose us to actions of the first sort, are distinguished by the name of *primary virtues*; leaving the name of *secondary virtues* to those propensities which dispose us to actions of the other sort*.

* Virtue signifies that disposition of mind which gives the ascendant to moral principles. Vice signifies that disposition of mind which gives little or no ascendant to moral principles.

The deduction above given makes it evident, that the general tendency of right actions is to promote the good of society, and of wrong actions, to obstruct that good. Universal benevolence is indeed not required of man; because to put that principle in practice, is beyond his utmost abilities. But for promoting the general good, every thing is required of him that he can accomplish; which will appear from reviewing the foregoing duties. The prohibition of harming others is an easy task; and upon that account is made universal. Our active duties are very different: man is circumscribed both in capacity and power; he cannot do good but in a slow succession; and therefore it is wisely ordered, that his obligation to do good should be confined to his relations, his friends, his benefactors. Even distress makes not benevolence a general duty: all a man can readily do, is to relieve those at hand; and accordingly we hear of distant misfortunes with little or no concern.

At the same time, let not the moral system be misapprehended, as if it were our duty, or even lawful, to prosecute what upon the whole we reckon the most beneficial to society, balancing ill with good. The moral sense permits not a violation of any person's right, however trivial, whatever benefit may thereby accrue to another. A man, for example, in low circumstances, by denying a debt he owes to a rich miser, saves himself and a hopeful family from ruin. In that case, the good effect far outweighs the ill, or rather has no counterbalance: but the moral sense permits not the debtor to balance ill with good; nor gives countenance to an unjust act, whatever benefit it may produce. And hence a maxim in which all moralists agree, That we must not do

ill to bring about even the greatest good; the final cause of which shall be given below (a).

S E C T. IV.

Principles of DUTY and of BENEVOLENCE.

HAVING thus shortly delineated the moral laws of our nature, we proceed to an article of great importance, which is, to enquire into the means provided by our Maker for compelling obedience to these laws. The moral sense is an unerring guide; but the most expert guide will not profit those who are not disposed to follow. This consideration makes it evident, that to complete the moral system, we ought to be endued with some principle or propensity, some impulsive power, to enforce obedience to the laws dictated by the moral sense.

The author of our nature leaves none of his works imperfect. In order to render us obsequious to the moral sense as our guide, he hath implanted in our nature the principles of duty, of benevolence, of rewards and punishments, and of reparation. It may possibly be thought, that

(a) Sect. 7.

rewards and punishments, of which afterward, are sufficient of themselves to enforce the laws of nature, without necessity of any other principle. Human laws, it is true, are enforced by these means; because no higher sanction is under command of a terrestrial legislator. But the celestial legislator, with power that knows no control, and benevolence that knows no bounds, hath enforced his laws by means no less remarkable for mildness than for efficacy: he employs no external compulsion; but, in order to engage our will on the right side, hath in the breast of every individual established the principles of duty and of benevolence, which efficaciously excite us to obey the dictates of the moral sense.

As the restraining, as well as active duties, are essential to society, our Maker has wisely ordered, that the principle which enforces these several duties, should be the most cogent of all that belong to our nature. Other principles may solicit, allure, or terrify; but the principle of duty assumes authority, commands, and must be obeyed.

As one great purpose of society, is to furnish opportunities without end of mutual aid and support, nature seconding that purpose, hath provided the principle of benevolence; which excites us to be kind, beneficent, and generous. Nor ought it to escape observation, that the Author of nature, attentive to our wants and to our well-being, hath endued us with a liberal portion of that principle. It enforces benevolence, not only to those we are connected with, but to our neighbours, and even to those we are barely acquainted with. Providence is peculiarly attentive to objects in distress, who require immediate aid and relief. To the general principle of benevolence, it hath superadded the passion of pity,

which in every feeling heart is irresistible. To make benevolence more extensive, would be fruitless, because here are objects in plenty to fill the most capacious mind. It would not be fruitless only, but hurtful to society: I say hurtful; for inability to procure gratification, rendering benevolence a troublesome guest, would weaken the principle itself, and attach us the more to selfishness, which we can always gratify. At the same time, though there is not room for greater variety of particular objects, yet the faculty we have of uniting numberless individuals in one complex object, enlarges greatly the sphere of benevolence: by that faculty our country, our government, our religion, become objects of public spirit, and of a lively affection. The individuals that compose the group, considered apart, may be too minute, or too distant, for our benevolence; but when comprehended in one great whole, accumulation makes them great, greatness renders them conspicuous; and affection, preserved entire and undivided, is bestowed upon an abstract object, as upon one that is single and visible; but with much greater energy, being proportioned to its superior dignity and importance. Thus it appears, that the principle of benevolence is not too sparingly scattered among men. It is indeed made subordinate to self-interest, which is wisely ordered, as will afterward be made evident (a); but its power and extent are nicely proportioned to the limited capacity of man, and to his situation in this world; so as better to fulfil its destination, than if it were an overmatch for self-interest, and for every other principle.

(a) Sect. 7.

S E C T. V.

Laws respecting REWARDS and PUNISHMENTS.

REFLECTING on the moral branch of our nature, qualifying us for society in a manner suited to our capacity, we cannot overlook the hand of our Maker; for means so finely adjusted to an important end, never happen by chance. It must however be acknowledged, that in many individuals, the principle of duty has not vigour nor authority sufficient to stem every tide of unruly passion: by the vigilance of some passions, we are taken unguarded; deluded by the sly insinuations of others; or overwhelmed with the stormy impetuosity of a third sort. Moral evil is thus introduced; and much wrong is done. This new scene suggests to us, that there must be some article still wanting, to complete the moral system. The means provided for directing us in the road of duty have been explained: but as in deviating from the road wrongs are committed, nothing hitherto has been said, about redressing such wrongs, nor about preventing the reiteration of them. To accomplish these important ends, there are added to the moral system, laws relative

tive to rewards and punishments, and to reparation ; of which in their order.

Many animals are qualified for society by instinct merely ; such as beavers, sheep, monkeys, bees, rooks. But men are seldom led by instinct : their actions are commonly prompted by passions ; of which there is an endless variety, social and selfish, benevolent and malevolent. And were every passion equally entitled to gratification, man would be utterly unqualified for society : he would be a ship without a rudder, obedient to every wind, and moving at random, without any ultimate destination. The faculty of reason would make no opposition : for were there no sense of wrong, it would be reasonable to gratify every desire that harms not ourselves : and to talk of punishment would be absurd ; for punishment, in its very idea, implies some wrong that ought to be redressed. Hence the necessity of the moral sense, to qualify us for society : by instructing us in our duty, it renders us accountable for our conduct, and makes us susceptible of rewards and punishments. The moral sense fulfils another valuable purpose : it erects in man an unerring standard for the application and measure of rewards and punishments.

To complete the system of rewards and punishments, it is necessary that a provision be made, both of power and of willingness to reward and punish. The Author of our nature hath provided amply for the former, by entitling every man to reward and punish as his native privilege. And he has provided for the latter, by a noted principle in our nature, prompting us to exercise the power. Impelled by that principle, we reward the virtuous with approbation and esteem, and punish the vicious with disapprobation and contempt. So prevalent is the principle, that

we

we have great satisfaction in rewarding, and no less in punishing.

As to punishment in particular, an action done intentionally to produce mischief, is criminal, and merits punishment. Such an action, being disagreeable, raises my resentment, even where I have no connection with the person injured; and the principle under consideration impels me to chastise the delinquent with indignation and hatred. An injury done to myself raises my resentment to a higher tone: I am not satisfied with so slight a punishment as indignation and hatred: the author must by my hand suffer mischief, as great as he has made me suffer.

Even the most secret crime escapes not punishment. The delinquent is tortured with remorse: he even desires to be punished; sometimes so ardently, as himself to be the executioner. There cannot be imagined a contrivance more effectual, to deter one from vice; for remorse is itself a grievous punishment. Self-punishment goes still farther: every criminal, sensible that he ought to be punished, dreads punishment from others; and this dread, however smothered during prosperity, breaks out in adversity, or in depression of mind: his crime stares him in the face, and every accidental misfortune is in his disturbed imagination interpreted to be a punishment.

“ And they said one to another, We are verily
“ guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw
“ the anguish of his soul, when he besought us;
“ and we would not hear: therefore is this dis-
“ tress come upon us. And Reuben answered
“ them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying,
“ Do not sin against the child; and ye would
“ not

“ not hear ? therefore behold also his blood is
 “ required (a) ” *.

No

(a) Genesis xlii. 21.

* John Duke of Britany, commonly termed *the Good Duke*, illustrious for generosity, clemency, and piety, reigned forty-three years; wholly employed about the good of his subjects. He was succeeded by his eldest son Francis, a prince weak and suspicious, and consequently fit to be governed. Arthur of Montauban, in love with the wife of Gilles, brother to the Duke, persuaded the Duke that his brother was laying plots to dethrone him. Gilles being imprisoned, the Duke's best friends conjured him to pity his unhappy brother, who might be imprudent, but assuredly was innocent ; but in vain. Gilles being prosecuted before the three estates of the province for high treason, was unanimously absolved ; which irritated the Duke more and more. Arthur of Montauban artfully suggested to his master to try poison ; which having miscarried, they next resolved to starve the prisoner to death. The unfortunate prince, through the bars of a window, cried aloud for bread ; but the passengers durst not supply him. One poor woman only had courage more than once to slip some bread within the window. He charged a priest, who had received his confession, to declare to the Duke, “ That seeing justice was refused him in this world, he appealed to “ Heaven, and called upon the Duke to appear before the judgment-seat of God in forty days.” The Duke and his favourite, amazed that the prince lived so long without nourishment, employed assassins to smother him with his bed-cloaths. The priest, in obedience to the orders he had received, presented himself before the Duke, and with a loud voice cited him in the name of the deceased Lord Gilles to appear before God in forty days. Shame and remorse verified the prediction. The Duke was seized with a sudden terror ; and the image of his brother, expiring.

No transgression of self-duty escapes punishment, more than transgression of duty to others. The punishments, though not the same, differ in degree more than in kind. Injustice is punished with remorse: impropriety with shame, which is remorse in a lower degree. Injustice raises indignation in the beholder, and so doth every flagrant impropriety: slighter improprieties receive a milder punishment, being rebuked with some degree of contempt, and commonly with derision (*a*).

So far we have been led in a beaten track; but in attempting to proceed, we are entangled in mazes and intricacies. An action well intended, may happen to produce no good; and an action ill intended, may happen to produce no mischief: a man overawed by fear, may be led to do mischief against his will; and a person, mistaking the standard of right and wrong, may be innocently led to do acts of injustice. By what rule, in such cases, are rewards and punishments to be applied? Ought a man to be rewarded when he does no good, or punished when he does no mischief: ought he to be punished for doing mischief against his will, or for doing mischief when he thinks he is acting innocently? These questions suggest a doubt, whether the standard of right and wrong be applicable to rewards and punishments.

ring by his orders, haunted him day and night. He decayed daily without any marks of a regular disease, and died within the forty days in frightful agony.

See this subject further illustrated in the *Sketch Principles and Progress of Theology*, chap. 1.

(*a*) See *Elements of Criticism*, chap. 10.

We have seen that there is an invariable standard of right and wrong, which depends not in any degree on private opinion or conviction. By that standard, all pecuniary claims are judged, all claims of property, and, in a word, every demand founded on interest, not excepting reparation, as will afterward appear. But with respect to the moral characters of men, and with respect to rewards and punishments, a different standard is erected in the common sense of mankind, neither rigid nor inflexible; which is, the opinion that men have of their own actions. It is mentioned above, that a man is esteemed innocent in doing what he himself thinks right, and guilty in doing what he himself thinks wrong. In applying this standard to rewards and punishments, we reward those who in doing wrong are however convinced that they are innocent; and punish those who in doing right are however convinced that they are guilty *. Some, it is true, are so perverted by bad education, or by superstition, as to espouse numberless absurd tenets, contradictory to the standard of right and wrong; and yet such men are no exception from the general rule: if they act according to conscience, they are innocent, and safe against punishment, however wrong the action may be; and if they act against conscience, they are guilty and punishable, however right the action may be: it is abhorrent to every moral perception, that a guilty person be rewarded, or an innocent person punished. Further, if mischief be done contrary to Will, as where a

* Virtuous and vicious, innocent and guilty, signify qualities both of men and of their actions. Approbation and disapprobation, praise and blame, signify certain emotions or sentiments of those who see or contemplate men and their actions.

man is compelled by fear, or by torture, to reveal the secrets of his party ; he may be grieved for yielding to the weakness of his nature, contrary to his firmest resolves ; but he has no check of conscience, and upon that account is not liable to punishment. And, lastly, in order that personal merit and demerit may not in any measure depend on chance, we are so constituted as to place innocence and guilt, not on the event, but on the intention of doing right or wrong ; and accordingly, whatever be the event, a man is praised for an action well intended, and condemned for an action ill intended.

But what if a man intending a certain wrong, happen by accident to do a wrong he did not intend ; as, for example, intending to rob a warren by shooting the rabbits, he accidentally wounds a child unseen behind a bush ? The delinquent ought to be punished for intending to rob ; and he is also subjected to repair the hurt done to the child : but he cannot be punished for the accidental wound ; because our nature regulates punishment by the intention, and not by the event*.

A crime

* During the infancy of nations, pecuniary compositions for crimes were universal ; and during that long period, very little weight was laid upon intention. This proceeded from the cloudiness and obscurity of moral perceptions among barbarians, joined with the resemblance of pecuniary punishment to reparation. Where a man does mischief intentionally, or is *versans in illicito*, as expressed in the Roman law, he is justly bound to repair all the harm that ensues, however accidentally ; and from the resemblance of pecuniary punishment to reparation, the rule was childishly extended to punishment. But this rule, so little consistent with moral principles, could not long subsist after pecuniary

A crime against any primary virtue is attended with severe and never-failing punishment, more efficacious than any that have been invented to enforce municipal laws: on the other hand, the preserving primary virtues inviolate, is attended with little merit. The secondary virtues are directly opposite: the neglecting them is not attended with any punishment; but the practice of them is attended with illustrious rewards. Offices of undeserved kindness, returns of good for ill, generous toils and sufferings for our friends or for our country, are attended with consciousness of self-merit, and with universal praise and admiration; the highest rewards human nature is susceptible of.

pecuniary compositions gave place to corporal punishment; and accordingly, among civilized nations, the law of nature is restored, which prohibits punishment for any mischief that is not intentional. The English must be excepted, who, remarkably tenacious of their original laws and customs, preserve in force, even as to capital punishment, the above-mentioned rule that obtained among barbarians, when pecuniary compositions were in vigour. The following passage is from Hales (Pleas of the Crown, chap. 39.) "Regularly
 " he that voluntarily and knowingly intends hurt to
 " the person of a man, as for example to beat him,
 " though he intend not death, yet if death ensues,
 " it excuseth not from the guilt of murder, or man-
 " slaughter at least, as the circumstances of the case
 " happen." And Foster, in his Crown-law, teaches the same doctrine, never once suspecting in it the least deviation from moral principles. "A shooteth at
 " the poultry of B, and by accident killeth a man:
 " if his intention was to steal the poultry, which
 " must be collected from circumstances, it will be
 " murder by reason of that felonious intent; but
 " if it was done wantonly, and without that inten-
 " tion, it will be barely manslaughter." (p. 259.)

From

From what is said, the following observation will occur : The pain of transgressing justice, fidelity, or any duty, is much greater than the pleasure of performing ; but the pain of neglecting a generous action, or any secondary virtue, is as nothing, compared with the pleasure of performing. Among the vices opposite to the primary virtues, the most striking moral deformity is found ; among the secondary virtues, the most striking moral beauty.

S E C T. VI.

Laws respecting REPARATION.

THE principle of reparation is made a branch of the moral system for accomplishing two ends : which are, to repress wrongs that are not criminal, and to make up the loss sustained by wrongs of whatever kind. With respect to the former, reparation is a species of punishment : with respect to the latter, it is an act of justice. These ends will be better understood, after ascertaining the nature and foundation of reparation ; to which the following division of actions is necessary. First, actions that we are bound to perform. Second, actions that we perform in prosecution

secution of a right or privilege. Third, indifferent actions, described above. Actions of the first kind subject not a man to reparation, whatever damage ensues ; because it is his duty to perform them, and it would be inconsistent with morality that a man should be subjected to reparation for doing his duty. The laws of reparation that concern actions of the second kind, are more complex. The social state, highly beneficial by affording opportunity for mutual good offices, is attended with some inconveniencies ; as where a person happens to be in a situation of necessarily harming others by exercising a right or privilege. If the foresight of harming another, restrain me not from exercising my right, the interest of that other is made subservient to mine : on the other hand, if such foresight restrain me from exercising my right, my interest is made subservient to his. What doth the moral sense provide in that case ? To preserve as far as possible an equality among persons born free, and by nature equal in rank, the moral sense lays down a rule, no less beautiful than salutary ; which is, That the exercising a right will not justify me for doing direct mischief ; but will justify me, though I foresee that mischief may possibly happen. The first branch of the rule resolves into a proposition established above, viz. • That no interest of mine, not even life itself, will authorise me to hurt an innocent person. The other branch is supported by expediency : for if the bare possibility of hurting others were sufficient to restrain a man from prosecuting his rights and privileges, men would be too much cramped in action ; or rather would be reduced to a state of absolute inactivity. With respect to the first branch, I am criminal, and liable even to punishment : with respect

respect to the other, I am not even culpable, nor bound to repair the mischief that happens to ensue.

With respect to the third kind, viz. indifferent actions, the moral sense dictates, that we ought carefully to avoid doing mischief, either direct or consequential. As we suffer no loss by forbearing actions that are done for pastime merely, such an action is *culpable* or *faulty*, if the consequent mischief was foreseen or might have been foreseen; and the actor of course is subjected to reparation. As this is a cardinal point in the doctrine of reparation, I shall endeavour to explain it more fully. Without intending any harm, a man may foresee, that what he is about to do will probably or possibly produce mischief; and sometimes mischief follows that was neither intended nor foreseen. The action in the former case is not criminal; because ill intention is essential to a crime: but it is culpable or faulty; and if mischief ensue, the actor blames himself, and is blamed by others, for having done what he ought not to have done. Thus, a man who throws a large stone among a crowd of people, is highly culpable; because he must foresee that mischief will probably ensue, though he has no intention to hurt any person. As to the latter case, though mischief was neither intended nor foreseen, yet if it might have been foreseen, the action is rash or uncautious, and consequently culpable or faulty in some degree. Thus, if a man in pulling down an old house, happen to wound one passing accidentally, without calling aloud to keep out of the way, the action is in some degree culpable, because the mischief might have been foreseen. But though mischief ensue, an action is not culpable or faulty if all reasonable precaution have been adhibited: the moral sense declares

declares the author to be innocent * and blameless: the mischief is accidental, and the action may be termed *unlucky*, but comes not under the denomination of either right or wrong. In general, when we act merely for amusement, our nature makes us answerable for the harm that ensues, if it was either foreseen or might with due attention have been foreseen. But our rights and privileges would profit us little, if their exercise were put under the same restraint: it is more wisely ordered, that the probability of mischief, even foreseen, should not restrain a man from prosecuting his concerns which may often be of consequence to him. He proceeds accordingly with a safe conscience, and is not afraid of being blamed either by God or man.

With respect to rash or uncautious actions, where the mischief might have been foreseen though not actually foreseen, it is not sufficient to escape blame, that a man, naturally rash or inattentive, acts according to his character: a degree of precaution is required, both by himself and by others, such as is natural to the generality of men: he perceives that he might and *ought* to have acted more cautiously; and his conscience reproaches him for his inattention, no less than if he were naturally more sedate and attentive. Thus the circumspection natural to mankind in general, is applied as a standard to every individual; and if they fall short of that standard, they are culpable and blameable;

* *Innocent* here is opposed to *culpable*; in a broader sense it is opposed to *criminal*. With respect to punishment, an action though culpable is innocent, if it be not criminal: with respect to reparation, it is not innocent if it be culpable.

however

however unforeseen by them the mischief may have been.

What is said upon culpable actions is equally applicable to culpable omissions; for by these also mischief may be occasioned, entitling the sufferer to reparation. If we forbear to do our duty with an intention to occasion mischief, the forbearance is criminal. The only question is, how far forbearance without such intention is culpable. Supposing the probability of mischief to have been foreseen, though not intended, the omission is highly culpable; and though neither intended nor foreseen, yet the omission is culpable in a lower degree, if there have been less care and attention than are proper for performing the duty required. But supposing all due care, the omission of extreme care and diligence is not culpable.

By ascertaining what acts and omissions are culpable or faulty, the doctrine of reparation is rendered extremely simple; for it may be laid down as a rule without a single exception, That every culpable act, and every culpable omission, binds us in conscience to repair the mischief occasioned by it. The moral sense binds us no farther; for it loads not with reparation the man who is blameless and innocent: the harm is accidental; and we are so constituted as not to be responsible in conscience for what happens by accident. But here it is requisite, that the man be in every respect innocent: for if he intend harm, though not what he has done, he will find himself bound in conscience to repair the accidental harm he has done; as, for example, when aiming a blow unjustly at one in the dark, he happens to wound another whom he did not suspect to be there. And hence it is a rule in all municipal laws, That one *versans in illicito* is liable to repair every consequent

sequent damage. That these particulars are wisely ordered by the Author of our nature for the good of society, will appear afterwards (*a*). In general, the rules above mentioned are dictated by the moral sense ; and we are compelled to obey them by the principle of reparation.

We are now prepared for a more particular inspection of the two ends of reparation above mentioned, viz. the repressing wrongs that are not criminal, and the making up what loss is sustained by wrongs of whatever kind. With respect to the first, it is clear, that punishment, in its proper sense, cannot be inflicted for a wrong that is culpable only ; and if nature did not provide some means for repressing such wrongs, society would scarce be a comfortable state. Laying conscience aside, pecuniary reparation is the only remedy that can be provided against culpable omissions : and with respect to culpable commissions, the necessity of reparation is still more apparent ; for conscience alone, without the sanction of reparation, would seldom have authority sufficient to restrain us from acting rashly or uncautiously, even where the possibility of mischief is foreseen, and far less where it is not foreseen.

With respect to the second end of reparation, my conscience dictates to me, that if a man suffer by my fault, whether the mischief was foreseen or not foreseen, it is my duty to make up his loss ; and I perceive intuitively, that the loss ought to rest ultimately upon me, and not upon the sufferer, who has not been culpable in any degree.

In every case where the mischief done can be estimated by a pecuniary compensation, the two

ends of reparation coincide. The sum is taken from the one as a sort of punishment for his fault, and is bestowed on the other to make up the loss he has sustained. But in numberless cases where mischief done cannot be compensated with money, reparation is in its nature a sort of punishment. Defamation, contemptuous treatment, personal restraint, the breaking one's peace of mind, are injuries that cannot be repaired by money; and the pecuniary reparation decreed against the wrong-doer, can only be a sort of punishment, in order to deter him from reiterating such injuries: the sum, it is true, is awarded to the person injured; but not as sufficient to make up his loss, which money cannot do, but only as a *solutum* for what he has suffered.

Hitherto it is supposed, that the man who intends a wrong action, is, at the same time, conscious of its being so. But a man may intend a wrong action, thinking erroneously that it is right; or a right action, thinking erroneously that it is wrong; and the question is, What shall be the consequence of such errors with respect to reparation. The latter case is clear: the person who occasionally suffers loss by a right action, has not a claim for reparation, because he has no just cause of complaint. On the other hand, if the action be wrong, the innocence of the author, for which he is indebted to an error in judgment, will not relieve him from reparation. When he is made sensible of his error, he feels himself bound in conscience to repair the harm he has done by a wrong action: and others, sensible of his error from the beginning, have the same feeling: nor will his obstinacy in resisting conviction, or his dullness in not apprehending his error, mend the matter: it is well that these defects relieve him from punishment, without wronging

others by denying a claim for reparation. A man's errors ought to affect himself only, and not those who have not erred. Hence in general, reparation always follows wrong; and is not affected by any erroneous opinion of a wrong action being right, more than of a right action being wrong.

But this doctrine suffers an exception with respect to a man, who having undertaken a trust, is bound in duty to act. A judge is in that situation: it is his duty to pronounce sentence in every case that comes before him; and if he judge according to the best of his knowledge, he is not liable for consequences. A judge cannot be subjected to reparation, unless it can be verified, that the judgment he gave was intentionally wrong. An officer of the revenue is in the same predicament. Led by a doubtful clause in a statute, he makes a seizure of goods as forfeited to the crown, which afterward, in the proper court, are found not to be seizable. The officer ought not to be subjected to reparation, if he have acted to the best of his judgment. This rule however must be taken with a limitation: a public officer who is grossly erroneous, will not be excused; for he ought to know better.

Reparation is due, though the immediate act be involuntary, provided it be connected with a preceding voluntary act. Example: "If A ride an unruly horse in Lincolns-inn fields, to tame him, and the horse breaking from A, run over B and grievously hurt him; B shall have an action against A: for though the mischief was done against the will of A, yet since it was his fault to bring a wild horse into a frequented place, where mischief might ensue, he must answer for the consequences." Gaius seems to carry this rule still farther, holding in general, that if a horse, by the weakness or unskilfulness

skilfulness of the rider, break away and do mischief, the rider is liable (a). But Gaius probably had in his eye a frequented place, where the mischief might have been foreseen. Thus in general a man is made liable for the mischief occasioned by his voluntary deed, though the immediate act that occasioned the mischief be involuntary.

S E C T. VII.

FINAL CAUSES of the foregoing Laws of Nature.

SEVERAL final causes have been occasionally mentioned in preceding parts of this essay, which could not conveniently be reserved for the present section, being necessary for explaining the subjects to which they relate, the final cause for instance of erecting a standard of morals upon the common sense of mankind. I proceed now to what have not been mentioned, or but slightly mentioned.

The final cause that presents itself first to view, respects man considered as an accountable being. The sense of being accountable, is one

(a) l. 8. § 1. ad leg. Aquil.

of our most vigilant guards against the silent attacks of vice. When a temptation moves me, it immediately occurs, What will the world say? I imagine my friends expostulating, my enemies reviling — I dare not dissemble — my spirits sink — the temptation vanishes. 2dly, Praise and blame, especially from those we regard, are strong incentives to virtue: but if we were not accountable for our conduct, praise and blame would be seldom well directed; for how should a man's intentions be known, without calling him to account? And praise or blame, frequently ill-directed, would lose their influence. 3dly, This branch of our nature, is the corner-stone of the criminal law. Did not a man think himself accountable to all the world, and to his judge in a peculiar manner, it would be natural for him to think, that the justest sentence pronounced against him, is oppression, not justice. 4thly, This branch is a strong cement to society. If we were not accountable beings, those connected by blood, or by country, would be no less shy and reserved, than if they were mere strangers to each other.

The final cause that next occurs, being simple and obvious, is mentioned only that it may not seem to have been overlooked. All right actions are agreeable, all wrong actions disagreeable. This is a wise appointment of Providence. We meet with so many temptations against duty, that it is not always an easy task to persevere in the right path: would we persevere, were duty disagreeable? And were acts of pure benevolence disagreeable, they would be extremely rare, however worthy of praise.

Another final cause respects duty, in contradistinction to pure benevolence. All the moral laws are founded on intuitive perception; and are so simple and plain, as to be perfectly apprehended by

by the most ignorant. Were they in any degree complex or obscure, they would be perverted by selfishness and prejudice. No conviction inferior to what is afforded by intuitive perception, could produce in mankind a common sense with respect to moral duties. Reason would afford no general conviction; because that faculty is distributed in portions so unequal, as to bar all hopes from it of uniformity either in practice or in opinion. At the same time, we are taught by woful experience, that reason has little influence over the greater part of men. Reason, it is true, aided by experience, supports morality, by convincing us, that we cannot be happy if we abandon duty for any other interest. But conviction seldom weighs much against imperious passion; to control which the vigorous and commanding principle of duty is requisite, directed by the shining light of intuition.

A proposition laid down above appears to be a sort of mystery in the moral system, viz. That though evidently all moral duties are contrived for promoting the general good, yet that choice is not permitted among different goods, or between good and ill; and that we are strictly tied down to perform or forbear certain particular acts, without regard to consequences; or, in other words, that we **must** not do wrong, whatever good it may produce. The final cause, which I am about to **unfold**, will clear this mystery, and set the beauty of the moral system in a conspicuous light. I begin with observing, that as the general good of mankind, or even of the society we live in, results from many and various circumstances intricately combined, it is far above the capacity of man, to judge in every instance what particular actions will tend the most to that end. The authorising therefore a man to trace

out his duty, by weighing endless circumstances good and ill, would open a wide door to partiality and passion, and often lead him unwittingly to prefer the preponderating ill, under a false appearance of being the greater good. At that rate, the opinions of men about right and wrong, would be as various as their faces; which, as observed above, would totally unhinge society. It is better ordered by Providence, even for the general good, that, avoiding complex and obscure objects, we are directed by the moral sense to perform certain plain and simple acts, which are obvious to us by intuitive perception.

In the next place, To permit ill in order to produce greater good, may suit a being of universal benevolence; but is repugnant to the nature of man, composed of selfish and benevolent principles. We have seen above, that the true moral balance depends on a subordination of self-love to duty, and of arbitrary benevolence to self-love; and accordingly every man is sensible of injustice when he is hurt in order to benefit another. Were it a rule in society, That a greater good to any other would make it an act of justice to deprive me of my life, of my reputation, or of my property, I should renounce the society of men, and associate with more harmless animals.

Thirdly, The true moral system, that which is displayed above, is not only better suited to the nature of man, and to his limited capacity and intelligence, but contributes more to the general good, which I now proceed to demonstrate. It would be losing time to prove, that a man entirely selfish is ill fitted for society; and we have seen (a), that universal benevolence, were it a

(a) Sect. 4.

duty, would contribute to the general good perhaps less than absolute selfishness. Man is too limited in capacity and in power for universal benevolence. Even the greatest monarch has not power to exercise his benevolence but within a very small compass; and if so, how unfit would such a duty be for private persons, who have very little power? Serving only to distress them by inability of performance, they would endeavour to smother it altogether, and give full scope to selfishness. Man is much better qualified for doing good, by a constitution in which benevolence is duly blended with self-love. Benevolence, as a duty, takes place of self-love; a regulation essential to society. Benevolence, as a virtue, not a duty, gives place to self-love; because as every man has more power, knowledge and opportunity, to promote his own good than that of others, a greater quantity of good is produced, than if benevolence were our only principle of action. This holds, even supposing no harm done to any person: much more would it hold, were we permitted to hurt some, in order to produce more good to others.

The foregoing final causes respect morality in general. We now proceed to particulars; and the first and most important is the law of restraint. Man is evidently framed for society: and as there can be no society among creatures who prey upon each other, it was necessary to provide against mutual injuries; which is effectually done by this law. Its necessity with respect to personal security is self-evident; and with respect to property, its necessity will appear from what follows. In the nature of every man, there is a propensity to hoard or store up things useful to himself and family. But this natural propensity would be rendered ineffectual, were he

not secured in the possession of what he thus stores up; for no man will toil to accumulate what he cannot securely possess. This security is afforded by the moral sense, which dictates, that the first occupant of goods provided by nature for the subsistence of man, ought to be secure in his possession, and that such goods ought to be inviolable as his property. Thus, by the great law of restraint, men have a protection for their goods, as well as for their persons; and are no less secure in society, than if they were separated from each other by impregnable walls.

Several other duties are little less essential than that of restraint to the existence of society. Mutual trust and confidence, without which society would be an uncomfortable state, enter into the character of the human species; to which the duties of veracity and fidelity correspond. The final cause of these corresponding duties, is obvious: the latter would be of no use in society without the former; and the former, without the latter, would be hurtful, by laying men open to fraud and deceit.

With respect to veracity in particular, man is so constituted, that he must be indebted to information for the knowledge of most things that benefit or hurt him; and if he could not depend upon information, society would be very little beneficial. Further, it is wisely ordered, that we should be bound by the moral sense always to speak truth, even where we perceive no harm in transgressing that duty; because it is sufficient that harm may ensue, though not foreseen. At the same time, falsehood always does mischief: it may happen not to injure us externally in our reputation, or in our goods: but it never fails to injure us internally; for one great blessing of society

ciety is, a candid intercourse of sentiments, of opinions, of desires, of wishes; and to admit any falsehood in such intercourse, would poison the most refined pleasures of life.

Because man is the weakest of all animals in a state of separation; and the very strongest in society, by mutual aid and support to which covenants and promises greatly contribute, these are made binding by the moral sense.

The final cause of the law of propriety, which enforces the duty we owe to ourselves, comes next in order. In discoursing upon those laws of nature which concern society, there is no occasion to mention any self-duty but what relates to society; of which kind are prudence, temperance, industry, firmness of mind. And that such qualities should be made our duty, is wisely ordered in a double respect; first, as qualifying us to act a proper part in society, and next, as intitling us to good-will from others. It is the interest, no doubt, of every man, to suit his behaviour to the dignity of his nature, and to the station allotted him by Providence; for such rational conduct contributes to happiness, by preserving health, procuring plenty, gaining the esteem of others, and, which of all is the greatest blessing, by gaining a justly-founded self-esteem. But here interest solely is not relied on: the powerful authority of duty is added, that in a matter of the utmost importance to ourselves, and of some importance to the society we live in, our conduct may be regular and steady. These duties tend not only to render a man happy in himself, but also, by procuring the good-will and esteem of others, to command their aid and assistance in time of need.

I proceed to the final causes of natural rewards and punishments. It is laid down above, that

controversies about property and about other matters of interest, must be adjusted by the standard of right and wrong. But to bring rewards and punishments under the same standard, without regard to private conscience, would be a plan unworthy of our Maker. It is extremely clear, that to reward one who is not conscious of merit, or to punish one who is not conscious of guilt, cannot answer any good end; and in particular, cannot tend either to improvement or to reformation of manners. How much more like the Deity is the plan of nature, which rewards no man who is not conscious that he merits reward, and punishes no man who is not conscious that he merits punishment! By that plan, and by that only, rewards and punishments accomplish every good end; a final cause most illustrious! The rewards and punishments that attend the primary and secondary virtues, are finely contrived for supporting the distinction between them, set forth above. Punishment must be confined to the transgression of primary virtues, it being the intention of nature, that secondary virtues be entirely free. On the other hand, secondary virtues are more highly rewarded than primary: generosity, for example, makes a greater figure than justice; and magnanimity, heroism, undaunted courage, a still greater figure. One would imagine, at first view, that primary virtues, being more essential, should be intitled to the first place in our esteem, and be more amply rewarded than secondary; and yet in elevating the latter above the former, peculiar wisdom and foresight are conspicuous. Punishment is appropriated to enforce primary virtues; and if these virtues were also attended with high rewards, secondary virtues, degraded to a lower rank, would be deprived of that enthusiastic

fiastic admiration which is their chief support: self-interest would universally prevail over benevolence, and banish those numberless favours we receive from each other in society, which are beneficial in point of interest, and still more so by generating affection and friendship.

In our progress through final causes we come at last to reparation, one of the principles destined by Providence for redressing wrongs committed, and for preventing the reiteration of them. The final cause of this principle, when the mischief arises from intention, is clear: for to protect individuals in society, it is not sufficient that the delinquent be punished; it is necessary over and above, that the mischief be repaired.

Secondly, Where the act is wrong or unjust, though not understood by the author to be so, it is wisely ordered that reparation should follow; which will thus appear. Considering the fallibility of man, it would be too severe to permit advantage to be taken of one's error in every circumstance. On the other hand, to make it a law in our nature, never to take advantage of error, would be giving too much indulgence to indolence and remission of mind, tending to make us neglect the improvement of our rational faculties. Our nature is so happily framed, as to avoid these extremes by distinguishing between gain and loss. No man is conscious of wrong, when he takes advantage of an error committed by another to save himself from loss: if there must be a loss, common sense dictates, that it ought to rest upon the person who has erred, however innocently, rather than upon the person who has not erred. Thus, in a competition among creditors about the estate of their bankrupt debtor,

debtor, every one is at liberty to avail himself of every error committed by his competitor, in order to recover payment. But *in lucro captando*, the moral sense teacheth a different lesson; which is, that no man ought to lay hold of another's error to make gain by it. Thus, an heir finding a rough diamond in the repositories of his ancestor, gives it away, mistaking it for a common pebble: the purchaser is in conscience and equity bound to restore, or to pay a just price.

Thirdly, The following considerations unfold a final cause, no less beautiful than that last mentioned. Society could not subsist in any tolerable manner, were full scope given to rashness and negligence, and to every action that is not strictly criminal; whence it is a maxim founded no less upon utility than upon justice, That men in society ought to be extremely circumspect, as to every action that may possibly do harm. On the other hand, it is also a maxim, That as the prosperity and happiness of man depend on action, activity ought to be encouraged, instead of being discouraged by dread of consequences. These maxims, seemingly in opposition, have natural limits that prevent their encroaching upon each other. There is a certain degree of attention and circumspection that men generally bestow upon affairs, proportioned to their importance: if that degree were not sufficient to defend against a claim of reparation, individuals would be too much cramped in action; which would be a great discouragement to activity: if a less degree were sufficient, there would be too great scope for rash or remiss conduct; which would prove the bane of society. These limits, which evidently tend to the good of society, are adjusted by the moral sense; which dictates, as laid down in the section of Reparation, that the man who acts with foresight

sight of the probability of mischief, or acts rashly and uncautiously without such foresight, ought to be liable for consequences; but that the man who acts cautiously, without foreseeing or suspecting any mischief, ought not to be liable for consequences.

In the same section it is laid down, that the moral sense requires from every man, not his own degree of vigilance and attention, which may be very small, but that which belongs to the common nature of the species. The final cause of that regulation will appear upon considering, that were reparation to depend upon personal circumstances, there would be a necessity of enquiring into the characters of men, their education, their manner of living, and the extent of their understanding; which would render judges arbitrary, and such law-suits inextricable. But by assuming the common nature of the species as a standard, by which every man in conscience judges of his own actions, law-suits about reparation are rendered easy and expeditious.

S E C T VIII.

LIBERTY and NECESSITY considered with respect to Morality.

HAVING, in the foregoing sections, ascertained the reality of a moral sense, with its sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, praise

praise and blame; the purpose of the present section is, to shew, that these sentiments are consistent with the laws that govern the actions of man as a rational being. In order to which it is first necessary to explain these laws; for there has been much controversy about them, especially among divines of the Arminian and Calvinist sects.

Human actions, as laid down in the first section, are of three kinds: one, where we act by instinct, without any view to consequences; one, where we act by will in order to produce some effect; and one, where we act against will. With respect to the first, the agent acts blindly, without deliberation or choice; and the external act follows necessarily from the instinctive impulse*. Actions done with a view to an end, are in a very different condition: in these, deliberation, choice, will, enter: the intention to accomplish the end goes first; the will to act in order to accomplish the end is next; and the external

* A stonechatter makes its nest on the ground or near it; and the young, as soon as they can shift for themselves, leave the nest instinctively. An egg of that bird was laid in a swallow's nest, fixed to the roof of a church. The swallow fed all the young equally without distinction. The young stonechatter left the nest at the usual time before it could fly; and falling to the ground, it was taken up dead. Here is instinct in purity, exerting itself blindly without regard to variation of circumstances. The same is observable in our dunghill-fowl. They feed on worms, corn, and other seeds dropt on the ground. In order to discover their food, nature has provided them with an instinct to scrape with the foot; and the instinct is so regularly exercised, that they scrape even when they are set upon a heap of corn.

act

act follows of course. It is the will then that governs every action done as means to an end; and it is desire to accomplish the end that puts the will in motion; desire in this view being commonly termed the *motive* to act. Thus, hearing that my friend is in the hands of robbers, I burn with desire to free him: desire influences my will to arm my servants, and to fly to his relief. Actions done against will come in afterward.

But what is it that raises desire? The answer is at hand: it is the prospect of attaining some agreeable end, or of avoiding one that is disagreeable. And if it be again enquired, What makes an object agreeable or disagreeable, the answer is equally ready, that our nature makes it so; and more we cannot say. Certain visible objects are agreeable, certain sounds, and certain smells: other objects of these senses are disagreeable. But there we must stop; for we are far from being so intimately acquainted with our own nature as to assign the causes. These hints are sufficient for my present purpose: if one be curious to know more, the theory of desire, and of agreeableness and disagreeableness, will be found in Elements of Criticism (a).

With respect to instinctive actions, no person, I presume, thinks that there is any freedom, more than in acts done against will: an infant applies to the nipple, and a bird builds its nest, no less necessarily than a stone falls to the ground. With respect to voluntary actions, such as are done with a view to an end, the necessity is the same, though less apparent at first view. The external

(a) Chap. 2.

action is determined by the will : the will is determined by desire : and desire by what is agreeable or disagreeable. Here is a chain of causes and effects, not one link of which is arbitrary, or under command of the agent : he cannot will but according to his desire : he cannot desire but according to what is agreeable or disagreeable in the objects perceived : nor do these qualities depend on his inclination or fancy ; he has no power to make a beautiful woman ugly, nor to make a rotten carcase sweet.

Many good men apprehending danger to morality from holding our actions to be necessary, endeavour to break the chain of causes and effects above mentioned, maintaining, “ That whatever influence desire or motives may have, it is the agent himself who is the cause of every action ; that desire may advise, but cannot command ; and therefore that a man is still free to act in contradiction to desire and to the strongest motives.” That a being may exist, which in every case acts blindly and arbitrarily, without having any end in view, I can make a shift to conceive : but it is difficult for me even to imagine a thinking and rational being, that has affections and passions, that has a desirable end in view, that can easily accomplish this end ; and yet, after all, can fly off, or remain at rest, without any cause, reason, or motive, to sway it. If such a whimsical being can possibly exist, I am certain that man is not such a being. There is perhaps not a person above the condition of a changeling, but can say why he did so and so, what moved him, what he intended. Nor is a single fact stated to make us believe, that ever a man acted against his own will or desire, who was not compelled by external violence. On the contrary, constant and universal experience proves, that

that human actions are governed by certain inflexible laws ; and that a man cannot exert his self-motive power, but in pursuance of some desire or motive.

Had a motive always the same influence, actions proceeding from it would appear no less necessary than the actions of matter. The various degrees of influence that motives have on different men at the same time, and on the same man at different times, occasion a doubt by suggesting a notion of chance. Some motives however have such influence, as to leave no doubt : a timid female has a physical power to throw herself into the mouth of a lion, roaring for food ; but she is withheld by terror no less effectually than by cords : if she should rush upon the lion, would not every one conclude that she was frantic ? A man, though in a deep sleep, retains a physical power to act, but he cannot exert it. A man, though desperately in love, retains a physical power to refuse the hand of his mistress ; but he cannot exert that power in contradiction to his own ardent desire, more than if he were fast asleep. Now if a strong motive have a necessary influence, there is no reason for doubting, but that a weak motive must also have its influence, the same in kind, though not in degree. Some actions indeed are strangely irregular ; but let the wildest action be scrutinized, there will always be discovered some motive or desire, which, however whimsical or capricious, was what influenced the person to act. Of two contending motives is it not natural to expect, that the stronger will prevail, however little its excess may be ? If there be any doubt, it must be from a supposition that a weak motive can be resisted arbitrarily. Where then are we to fix the boundary between a weak and a strong motive ? If a
weak

weak motive can be resisted, why not one a little stronger, and why not the strongest? In Elements of Criticism (a) the reader will find many examples of contrary motives weighing against each other. Let him ponder these with the strictest attention: his conclusion will be, that between two motives, however nearly balanced, a man has not an arbitrary choice, but must yield to the stronger. The mind indeed fluctuates for some time, and feels itself in a measure loose: at last, however, it is determined by the more powerful motive, as a balance is by the greater weight after many vibrations.

Such then are the laws that govern our voluntary actions. A man is absolutely free to act according to his own will; greater freedom than which is not conceivable. At the same time, as man is made accountable for his conduct, to his Maker, to his fellow-creatures, and to himself, he is not left to act arbitrarily; for at that rate he would be altogether unaccountable: his will is regulated by desire; and desire by what pleases or displeases him. Where we are subjected to the will of another, would it be our wish, that his will should be under no regulation? And where we are guided by our own will, would it be reasonable to wish, that it should be under no regulation, but be exerted without reason, without any motive, and contrary to common sense? Thus, with regard to human conduct, there is a chain of laws established by nature, not one link of which is left arbitrary. By that wise system, man is rendered accountable: by it, he is made a fit subject for divine and human government: by it, persons of sagacity foresee the conduct of

(a) Chap. 2. part 4.

others : and by it, the prescience of the Deity with respect to human actions, is firmly established.

The absurd figure men would make if they could act contrary to motives, should be sufficient, one may think, to open our eyes without an argument. What a despicable figure does a person make, upon whom the same motive has great influence at one time, and very little at another ? He is a bad member of society, and cannot be relied on as a friend or as an associate. But how highly rational is this supposed person, compared with one who can act in contradiction to every motive ? The former may be termed whimsical or capricious : the latter is worse ; he is absolutely unaccountable, and cannot be the subject of government, more than a lump of matter unconscious of its own motion.

Let the faculty of acting be compared with that of reasoning : the comparison will tend to soften our reluctance to the necessary influence of motives. A man sometimes blunders in reasoning ; but he is tied by his nature, to form conclusions upon what appears to him true at the time. If he could arbitrarily form a different conclusion, what an absurd reasoner would he be ! Would a man be less absurd, if he had a power of acting against motives, and contrary to what he thinks right or eligible ? To act in that manner, is inconsistent with any notion we can form of a sensible being. Nor do we suppose that man is such a being : in accounting for any action, however whimsical, we always ascribe it to some motive, never once dreaming that there was no motive.

And after all, where would be the advantage of such an arbitrary power ? Can a rational man wish seriously to have such a power ? or can he seriously

seriously think, that God would make man so whimsical a being? To endue man with a degree of self-command sufficient to resist every vicious motive, without any power to resist those that are virtuous, would indeed be a gift of value; but too great for man, because it would exalt him to be an angel. But such self-command as to resist both equally, which is the present supposition, would unqualify us for being governed either by God or by man. Better far to be led as rational creatures by the prospect of good, however erroneous our judgment may sometimes be.

Considering that man is the only terrestrial being formed to know his Maker, and to worship him, will it not sound harshly, while all other animals are subjected to divine government, and unerringly fulfil their destination, that man alone should be withdrawn from divine government, and be so framed, that neither his Maker, nor he himself, can foresee what he will do the next moment? The power of resisting the strongest motives, whether of religion or of morality, would render him independent of the Deity.

This reasoning is too diffuse: may it not be comprehended in a single view? it will make the deeper impression. There may be conceived different systems for governing man as a thinking and rational being. One is, That virtuous motives should always prevail over every other motive. This, in appearance, would be the most perfect government. But man is not so constituted: and there is reason to doubt, whether such perfection would in his present state correspond to the other branches of his nature (a). Ano-

(a) See book 2. sketch 1. at the end.

ther system is, That virtuous motives sometimes prevail, sometimes vicious; and that we are always determined by the prevailing motive. This is the true system of nature; and hence great variety of character and of conduct among men. A third system is, That motives have influence; but that one can act in contradiction to every motive. This is the system I have been combating. Observe only what it resolves into. How is an action to be accounted for that is done in contradiction to every motive? It wanders from the region of common sense into that of mere chance. If such were the nature of man, no one could rely on another: a promise or an oath would be a rope of sand: the utmost cordiality between my friend and me, would be no security against his stabbing me with the first weapon that comes in his way. Would any man wish to have been formed according to such a system? He would probably wish to have been formed according to the system first mentioned: but that is denied him, virtuous motives sometimes prevailing, sometimes vicious; and from the wisdom of Providence we have reason to believe, that this law is of all the best fitted for man in his present state.

To conclude this branch of the subject: In none of the works of Providence, so far as we can penetrate, is there displayed a deeper reach of art and wisdom, than in the laws of action peculiar to man as a thinking and rational being. Were he left loose, to act in contradiction to motives, there would be no place for prudence, foresight, nor for adjusting means to an end: it could not be foreseen by others what a man will do the next hour; nay it could not be foreseen, even by himself. Man would not be capable of rewards and punishments: he would not be fitted,

ted, either for divine or for human government : he would be a creature that has no resemblance to the human race. But man is not left loose ; for though he is at liberty to act according to his own will, yet his will is regulated by desire, and desire by what pleases and displeases. This connection preserves uniformity of conduct, and confines human actions within the great chain of causes and effects. By this admirable system, liberty and necessity, seemingly incompatible, are made perfectly concordant, fitting us for society, and for government both human and divine.

Having explained the laws that govern human actions, we proceed to what is chiefly intended in the present section, which is, to examine, how far the moral sentiments handled in the foregoing sections are consistent with these laws. Let it be kept in view, that our moral sentiments and feelings are founded entirely upon the moral sense ; which unfolds to us a right and a wrong in actions. From the same sense are derived the sentiments of approbation and praise when a man does right, and of disapprobation and blame when he does wrong. Were we destitute of the moral sense, right and wrong, praise and blame, would be as little understood as colours are by one born blind*.

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* In an intricate subject like the present, great care should be taken to avoid ambiguities. The term *praise* has two different significations : in one sense it is opposed to *blame* ; in another to *dispraise*. In the former sense it expresses a moral sentiment : in the latter, it expresses only the approving any object that pleases me. I praise one man for his candour, and blame another for being a double-dealer. These, both of them, imply will and intention. I praise a man for being

The formidable argument that is urged, to prove that our moral sentiments are inconsistent with the supposed necessary influence of motives, is what follows. "If motives have a necessary influence on our actions, there can be no good reason to praise a man for doing right, nor to blame him for doing wrong. What foundation can there be, either for praise or blame, when it was not in a man's power to have acted otherwise? A man commits murder instigated by a sudden fit of revenge: why should he be punished, if he acted necessarily, and could not resist the violence of the passion?" Here it is supposed, that a power of resistance is essential to praise and blame. But upon examination it will be found, that this supposition has not any support in the moral sense, nor in reason, nor in the common sense of mankind.

With respect to the first, the moral sense, as we have seen above, places innocence and guilt, and consequently praise and blame, entirely upon will and intention. The connection between the motive and the action, so far from diminishing, enhances the praise or blame. The greater influence a virtuous motive has, the greater is the virtue of the agent, and the more warm our praise. On the other hand, the greater influence a vicious motive has, the greater is the vice of the agent, and the more violently do we blame him. As this is the cardinal point, I wish to have it considered in a general view. It is essen-

being acute; but for being dull, I only dispraise him. I praise a woman for beauty; but blame not any for ugliness, I only dispraise them. None of these particulars imply will or intention.

tial both to human and divine government, that the influence of motives should be necessary. It is equally essential, that that necessary influence should not have the effect to lessen guilt in the estimation of men. To fulfil both ends, guilt is placed by the moral sense entirely upon will and intention : a man accordingly blames himself for doing mischief willingly and intentionally, without once considering whether he acted necessarily or not. And his sentiments are adopted by all the world : they pronounce the same sentence of condemnation that he himself does. A man put to the torture, yields to the pain, and with bitter reluctance reveals the secrets of his party : another does the same, yielding to a tempting bribe. The latter only is blamed as guilty of a crime ; and yet the bribe perhaps operated as strongly on the latter, as torture did on the former. But the one was compelled against his will to reveal the secrets of his party ; and therefore is innocent : the other acted willingly, in order to procure a great sum of money ; and therefore is guilty.

With respect to reason, I observe, that the argument I am combating is an appeal to a wrong tribunal : the moral sense is the only judge in this controversy, not the faculty of reason. At the same time, I should have no fear of a sentence against me, were reason to be the judge. For would not reason dictate, that the less a man wavers about his duty ; or, in other words, the less influence vicious motives have, the more praise-worthy he is ; and the more blameable, the less influence virtuous motives have ?

Nor are we led by common sense to differ from reason and the moral sense. A man commits murder, overcome by a sudden fit of revenge which he could not resist ; will not one be led to reflect,

reflect, even at first view, that the man did not wish to resist? on the contrary, that he would have committed the murder, though he had not been under any necessity? A person of plain understanding will say, What signifies it whether the criminal could resist or not, when he committed the murder wittingly and willingly? A man gives poison privately out of revenge. Does any one doubt of his guilt, when he never once repented; though after administering the poison it no longer was in his power to draw back? A man may be guilty and blame-worthy, even where there is external compulsion that he cannot resist. With sword in hand I run to attack an enemy: my foot slipping, I fall headlong upon him, and by that accident the sword is pushed into his body. The external act was not the effect of Will, but of accident: but my intention was to commit murder, and I am guilty. All men acknowledge, that the Deity is necessarily good. Does that circumstance detract from his praise in common apprehension? On the contrary, he merits from us the highest praise on that very account.

It is commonly said, that there can be no virtue where there is no struggle. Virtue, it is true, is best known from a struggle: a man who has never met with a temptation, can be little confident of his virtue. But the observation taken in a strict sense, is undoubtedly erroneous. A man, tempted to betray his trust, wavers; but, after much doubting, refuses at last the bribe. Another hesitates not a moment, but rejects the bribe with disdain: duty is obstinate, and will not suffer him even to deliberate. Is there no virtue in the latter? Undoubtedly more than in the former.

Upon the whole, it appears that praise and blame rest ultimately upon the disposition or frame of mind. Nor is it obvious, that a power to act against motives, could vary in any degree these moral sentiments. When a man commits a crime, let it be supposed, that he could have resisted the prevailing motive. Why then did he not resist, instead of bringing upon himself shame and misery? The answer must be, for no other can be given, that his disposition is vicious, and that he is a detestable creature. Further, it is not a little difficult to conceive, how a man can resist a prevailing motive, without having any thing in his mind that should engage him to resist it. But letting that pass, I make the following supposition. A man is tempted by avarice to accept a bribe: if he resist upon the principle of duty, he is led by the prevailing motive: if he resist without having any reason or motive for resisting, I cannot discover any merit in such resistance: it seems to resolve into a matter of chance or accident, whether he resist or do not resist. Where can the merit lie of resisting a vicious motive, when resistance happens by mere chance? and where the demerit of resisting a virtuous motive, when it is owing to the same chance? If a man, actuated by no principle, good or bad, and having no end or purpose in view, should kill his neighbour, I see not that he would be more accountable, than if he had acted in his sleep, or were mad.

Human punishments are perfectly consistent with the necessary influence of motives, without supposing a power to withstand them. If it be urged, That a man ought not to be punished for committing a crime when he could not resist; the answer is, That as he committed the crime intentionally, and with his eyes open, he is guilty in
his

his own opinion, and in the opinion of all men; and he justly suffers punishment, to prevent him or others from doing the like in time to come. The dread of punishment is a weight in the scale on the side of virtue, to counterbalance vicious motives.

The final cause of this branch of our nature is admirable. If the necessary influence of motives had the effect either to lessen the merit of a virtuous action, or the demerit of a crime, morality would be totally unhinged. The most virtuous action would of all be the least worthy of praise; and the most vicious be of all the least worthy of blame. Nor would the evil stop there: instead of curbing inordinate passions, we should be encouraged to indulge them, as an excellent excuse for doing wrong. Thus, the moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, of praise and blame, are found perfectly consistent with the laws above mentioned that govern human actions, without having recourse to an imaginary power of acting against motives.

The only plausible objection I have met with against the foregoing theory, is the remorse a man feels for a crime he suddenly commits, and as suddenly repents of. During a fit of bitter remorse for having slain my favourite servant in a violent passion, without just provocation, I accuse myself for having given way to passion; and acknowledge that I could and ought to have restrained it. Here we find remorse-founded on a system directly opposite to that above laid down; a system that acknowledges no necessary connection between an action and the motive that produced it; but, on the contrary, supposes that it is in a man's power to resist his passion, and that he ought to resist it. What shall be said upon this point? Can a man be a necessary agent, when he

is conscious of the contrary, and is sensible that he can act in contradiction to motives? This objection is strong in appearance; and would be invincible, were we not happily relieved of it by a doctrine laid down in Elements of Criticism (a) concerning the irregular influence of passion on our opinions and sentiments. Upon examination, it will be found, that the present case may be added to the many examples there given of this irregular influence. In a peevish fit, I take exception at some slight word or gesture of my friend, which I interpret as if he doubted of my veracity. I am instantly in a flame: in vain he protests that he had no meaning, for impatience will not suffer me to listen. I bid him draw, which he does with reluctance; and before he is well prepared, I give him a mortal wound. Bitter remorse and anguish succeed instantly to rage. "What have I done? why did I not abstain? I was not mad, and yet I have murdered my innocent friend: there is the hand that did the horrid deed; why did not I rather turn it against my own heart?" Here every impression of necessity vanishes: my mind tells me that I was absolutely free, and that I ought to have smothered my passion. I put an opposite case. A brutal fellow beats me with great indignity, and proceeds even to a blow. My passion rises beyond the possibility of restraint: I can scarce forbear so long as to bid him draw; and that moment I stab him to the heart. I am sorry for having been engaged with a ruffian, but have no contrition nor remorse. In this case, my sentiments are very different from what they are in the other. I never

(a) Chap. 2. part 5.

once dream that I could have resisted the impulse of passion: on the contrary, my thoughts and words are, "That flesh and blood could not bear the affront; and that I must have been branded for a coward, had I not done what I did." In reality, both the actions were equally necessary. Whence then opinions and sentiments so opposite to each other? The irregular influence of passion on our opinions and sentiments, will solve the question. All violent passions are prone to their own gratification. A man affected with deep remorse abhors himself, and is odious in his own eyes; and it gratifies the passion, to indulge the thought that his guilt is beyond the possibility of excuse. In the first case accordingly, remorse forces upon me a conviction that I might have restrained my passion, and ought to have restrained it. I will not give way to any excuse; because in a fit of remorse it gives me pain to be excused. In the other case, there being no remorse, there is no disguise; and things appear in their true light. To illustrate this reasoning, I observe, that passion warps my judgment of the actions of others, as well as of my own. Many examples are given in the chapter above quoted: join to these the following. My servant aiming at a partridge, happens to shoot a favourite spaniel crossing the way unseen. Inflamed with anger, I storm at his rashness, pronounce him guilty, and will listen to no excuse. When my passion is spent, I become sensible that it was merely accidental, and that the man is absolutely innocent. The nurse overlays my only child, the long-expected heir to a great estate. It is with difficulty that I refrain from putting her to death: "The wretch has murdered my infant, and deserves to be torn to pieces."

When my passion subsides, I see the matter in a very different light. The poor woman is inconsolable, and can scarce believe that she is innocent: she bitterly reproaches herself for want of care and concern. But, upon cool reflection, both she and I are sensible, that no person in sound sleep has any self-command; and that we cannot be answerable for any action of which we are not conscious. Thus, upon the whole, we find, that any impression we may occasionally have of being able to act in contradiction to motives, is the result of passion, not of sound judgment.

The reader will observe, that this section is copied from Essays on Morality and Natural Religion. The ground-work is the same: the alterations are only in the superstructure; and the subject is abridged in order to adapt it to its present place. Part of the abridgment was published in the second edition of the Principles of Equity. But as law-books have little currency, the publishing the whole in one essay, will not, I hope, be thought improper.

A P P E N D I X.

Upon CHANCE and CONTINGENCY.

I HOLD it to be an intuitive proposition, That the Deity is the primary cause of all things; that with consummate wisdom he formed the great plan of government, which he carries on by laws suited to the different natures of animate and inanimate beings; and that these laws, produce a regular chain of causes and effects in the moral as well as the material world, admitting no events but what are comprehended in the original plan (*a*). Hence it clearly follows, that chance is excluded out of this world, that nothing can happen by accident, and that no event is arbitrary or contingent. This is the doctrine of the essay quoted; and, in my apprehension, well founded. But I cannot subscribe to what follows, viz. “That we have an impression of chance and contingency, which consequently must be delusive.” I would not willingly admit any delusion in the nature of man, where it is not made

(*a*) See *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion*, part 1. essay 3.

evident beyond contradiction ; and I now see clearly, that the impression we have of chance and contingency, is not delusive, but perfectly consistent with the established plan.

The explanation of chance and contingency in the said essay, shall be given in the author's own words, as a proper text to reason upon. “ In
“ our ordinary train of thinking, it is certain
“ that all events appear not to us as necessary.
“ A multitude of events seem to be under our
“ power to cause or to prevent ; and we readily
“ make a distinction betwixt events that are
“ *necessary*, *i. e.* that must be ; and events that
“ are *contingent*, *i. e.* that may be, or may not
“ be. This distinction is void of truth : for all
“ things that fall out either in the material or
“ moral world, are, as we have seen, alike ne-
“ cessary, and alike the result of fixed laws.
“ Yet, whatever conviction a philosopher may
“ have of this, the distinction betwixt things
“ necessary and things contingent, possesses his
“ common train of thought, as much as it pos-
“ sesses the most illiterate. We act universally
“ upon that distinction : nay it is in truth the
“ cause of all the labour, care, and industry,
“ of mankind. I illustrate this doctrine by an
“ example. Constant experience hath taught
“ us, that death is a necessary event. The hu-
“ man frame is not made to last for ever in its
“ present condition ; and no man thinks of more
“ than a temporary existence upon this globe.
“ But the particular time of our death appears a
“ contingent event. However certain it be,
“ that the time and manner of the death of each
“ individual is determined by a train of preced-
“ ing causes, and is no less fixed than the
“ hour of the sun's rising or setting ; yet no per-
“ son is affected by this doctrine. In the care
“ of

“ of prolonging life, we are directed by the sup-
“ posed contingency of the time of death, which,
“ to a certain term of years, we consider as de-
“ pending in a great measure on ourselves, by
“ caution against accidents, due use of food,
“ exercise, &c. These means are prosecuted
“ with the same diligence as if there were in
“ fact no necessary train of causes to fix the pe-
“ riod of life. In short, whoever attends to his
“ own practical ideas, whoever reflects upon the
“ meaning of the following words which occur
“ in all languages, of things *possible, contingent,*
“ *that are in our power to cause or prevent;*
“ whoever, I say, reflects upon these words,
“ will clearly see, that they suggest certain per-
“ ceptions or notions repugnant to the doctrine
“ above established of universal necessity.”

In order to show that there is no repugnance,
I begin with defining *chance* and *contingency*.
The former is applied to events that have hap-
pened; the latter to future events. When we
say a thing has happened by *chance*, we do not
mean that *chance* was the cause; for no person
ever thought that *chance* is a thing that can act,
and by acting produce events: we only mean,
that we are ignorant of the cause, and that, for
aught we see, it might have happened or not
happened, or have happened differently. Aim-
ing at a bird, I shoot *by chance* a favourite span-
iel: the meaning is not, that chance killed the
dog, but that as to me the dog's death was acci-
dental. With respect to contingency, future
events that are variable, and the cause unknown,
are said to be contingent; changes of the wea-
ther, for example, whether it will be frost or
thaw to-morrow, whether fair or foul. In a
word, chance and contingency applied to events,
mean not that such events happen without any

cause, but only that we are ignorant of the cause.

It appears to me clear, that there is no such thing in human nature as a sense of *contingency*; or, in other words, a sense that any thing happens without a cause: such a sense would be grossly delusive. True it is indeed, that our sense of a cause is but cloudy and indistinct with respect to certain events. Events that happen regularly, such as summer and winter, rising and setting of the sun, give us a distinct impression of a cause. The impression is less distinct with respect to events less regular, such as alterations of the weather: and extremely indistinct with respect to events that seldom happen, and that happen without any known cause. But with respect to no event whatever does our sense of a cause vanish altogether, and give place to a positive sense of contingency, that is, a sense of things happening without a cause.

Chance and contingency thus explained, suggest not any perception or notion repugnant to the doctrine of universal necessity; for my ignorance of a cause, does not, even in my own apprehension, exclude a cause. Descending to particulars, I take the example mentioned in the text, viz. the uncertainty of the time of my death. Knowing that my life depends in some measure on myself, I use all means to preserve it, by proper food, exercise, and care to prevent accidents. Nor is there any delusion here. I am moved to use these means by the desire I have to live: these means accordingly prove effectual to carry on my present existence to the appointed period; and in that view are so many links in the great chain of causes and effects. A burning coal falling from the grate upon the floor, wakes me from a sound sleep. I start up to extinguish the fire.

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The motive is irresistible: nor have I reason to resist, were it in my power; for I consider the extinction of the fire by my hand to be one of the means chosen by Providence for prolonging my life to its destined period.

Were there a chain of causes and effects established entirely independent on me, and were my life in no measure under my own power, it would indeed be fruitless for me to act; and the absurdity of knowingly acting in vain, would be a prevailing motive for remaining at rest. Upon that supposition, the *ignavia ratio* of Chrysippus might take place; *cui si pareamus, nihil omnino agamus in vita* *. But I act necessarily when influenced by motives; and I have no reason to forbear, considering that my actions, by producing their intended effects, contribute to carry on the universal chain.

* “The indolent principle; which if we were to follow, we should do nothing in life.”

P A R T II.

P R O G R E S S of M O R A L I T Y.

HAVING unfolded the principles of morality, the next step is to trace out its gradual progress from its infancy among savages, to its maturity among polished nations. The history of opinions concerning the foundation of morality, falls not within my plan; and I am glad to be relieved from an article that is executed in perfection by more able hands (*a*).

An animal is brought forth with every one of its external members; and completes its growth, not by production of any new member, but by addition of matter to those originally formed. The same holds with respect to internal members; the senses, for example, instincts, powers and faculties, principles and propensities: these are coeval with the individual, and are gradually unfolded, some early, some late. The external senses, being necessary for self-preservation, soon arrive at maturity. Some internal senses, of order for instance, of propriety, of dignity, being

(*a*) Dr Cudworth and Dr Smith.

of no use during infancy, are not only slow in their progress toward maturity, but require much culture. Among savages they are scarce perceptible.

The moral sense, in its progress, differs from those last mentioned: it is frequently discovered, even in childhood. It is however slow of growth, and seldom arrives at perfection without culture and experience.

The moral sense not only ripens gradually with the other internal senses mentioned, but from them acquires force and additional authority: a savage makes no difficulty to kill an enemy in cold blood: bloody scenes are familiar to him, and his moral sense is not sufficiently vigorous to give him compunction. The action appears in a different light to a person who has more delicacy of feeling; and accordingly the moral sense has much more authority over those who have received a refined education, than over savages.

It is pleasant to trace the progress of morality in members of a polished nation. Objects of external sense make the first impressions; and from them are derived a stock of simple ideas. Affection, accompanying ideas, is first directed to particular objects, such as my brother, my wife, my friend. The mind opening by degrees, takes in complex objects, such as my country, my religion, the government under which I live; and these also become objects of affection. Our connections multiply, and the moral sense gaining strength as the mind opens, regulates our duty to each of them. Objects of hatred multiply, as well as objects of affection, and give full scope to dissocial passions, the most formidable antagonists that morality has to encounter. But nature hath provided a remedy: the person who indulges malice or revenge, is commonly the
greatest

greatest sufferer by the indulgence : men become wise by experience, and have more peace and satisfaction in fostering kindly affection : stormy passions are subdued, or brought under rigid discipline ; and benevolence triumphs over selfishness. We refine upon the pleasures of society : we learn to submit our opinions : we affect to give preference to others ; and readily fall in with whatever sweetens social intercourse : we carefully avoid causes of discord ; and overlooking trifling offences, we are satisfied with moderate reparation, even for gross injuries.

A nation from its original savage state, grows to maturity like the individuals above described ; and the progress of morality is the same in both. The savage state is the infancy of a nation, during which the moral sense is feeble, yielding to custom, to imitation, to passion. But a nation, like a member of a polished society, ripens gradually, and acquires a taste in the fine arts, with acuteness of sense in matters of right and wrong. Hatred and revenge, the great obstacles to moral duty, raged without control, while the privilege of avenging wrongs was permitted to individuals (*a*). But hatred and revenge yielding gradually to the pleasures of society, and to the growing authority of the moral sense ; and benevolent affections prevailed over dissocial passions. In that comfortable period ; we hear no more of cruelty as a national character : on the contrary, the aversion we have to an enemy, is even in war exercised with moderation. Nor do the stormy passions ever again revive ; for after a nation begins to decline from its meridian height, the pas-

(*a*) See Historical Law-tracts, tract 1.

sions that prevail are not of the violent kind, but selfish, timorous, and deceitful.

Morality however has not to this day arrived to such maturity as to operate between nations with equal steadiness and vigour as between individuals. Ought this to be regretted as an imperfection in our nature? I think not: had we the same compunction of heart for injuring a nation as for injuring an individual, and were injustice equally blameable as to both, war would cease, and a golden age ensue; than which a greater misfortune could not befall the human race (*a*).

In the progress from maturity to a declining state, a nation differs widely from an individual. Old age puts an end to the latter: there are many causes that weaken the former; but old age is none of them, if it be not in a metaphorical sense. Riches, selfishness, and luxury, are the diseases that weaken prosperous nations: these diseases, following each other in a train, corrupt the heart, dethrone the moral sense, and make an anarchy in the soul: men stick at no expence to purchase pleasure; and they stick at no vice to supply that expence.

Such are the outlines of morality in its progress from birth to burial; and these outlines I propose to fill up with an induction of particulars. Looking back to the commencement of civil society, when no wants were known but those of nature, and when such wants were amply provided for; we find individuals of the same tribe living innocently and cordially together: they had no irregular appetites, nor any ground of strife.

In that state, moral principles joined their influence with that of national affection, to secure individuals from harm. Savages accordingly, who have plenty of food, and are simple in habitation and clothing, seldom transgress the rules of morality within their own tribe. Diodorus Siculus, who composed his history recently after Cæsar's expedition into Britain, says, that the inhabitants dwelt in mean Cottages covered with reeds or sticks; that they were of much sincerity and integrity, contented with plain and homely fare; and were strangers to the excess and luxury of rich men. In Friezeland, in Holland, and in other maritime provinces of the Netherlands, locks and keys were unknown, till the inhabitants became rich by commerce: they contented themselves with bare necessities, which every one had in plenty. The Laplanders have no notion of theft. When they make an excursion into Norway, which is performed in the summer months, they leave their huts open, without fear that any thing will be purloined. Formerly, they were entirely upright in their only commerce, that of bartering the skins of wild beasts for tobacco, brandy, and coarse cloth. But being often cheated by strangers, they began to more cunning. Crantz, describing the inhabitants of Iceland before they were corrupted by commerce with strangers, says, that they lived under the same roof with their cattle; that every thing was common among them except their wives and children; and that they were simple in their manners, having no appetite but for what nature requires. In the reign of Edwin King of Northumberland, a child, as historians report, might have travelled with a purse of gold, without hazard of robbery: in our days of luxury, want is so intolerable, that even fear of death is not

not sufficient to deter us. All travellers agree, that the native Canadians are perfectly disinterested, abhorring deceit and lying. The Californians are fond of iron and sharp instruments; and yet are so strictly honest, that carpenter-tools left open during night, were safe. The savages of North America had no locks for their goods: they probably have learned from Europeans, to be more circumspect. Procopius bears testimony (*a*), that the Sclavi, like the Huns, were innocent people, free of all malice. Plan Carpin, the Pope's ambassador to the Cham of Tartary, ann. 1246, says, that the Tartars are not addicted to thieving; and that they leave their goods open without a lock. Nicholas Damascenus reports the same of the Celtæ. The original inhabitants of the island Borneo, expelled by the Mahometans from the sea-coast to the center of the country, are honest, industrious, and kindly to each other: they have some notion of property, but not such as to render them covetous. Pagans in Siberia are numerous; and, though grossly ignorant, especially in matters of religion, they are a good moral people. It is rare to hear among them of perjury, thieving, fraud, or drunkenness; if we except those who live among the Russian Christians, with whose vices they are tainted. Strahlenberg (*b*) bears testimony to their honesty. Having employed a number of them in a long navigation, he slept in the same boat with men whose names he knew not, whose language he understood not, and yet

(*a*) Historia Gothica, lib. 3.

(*b*) Description of Russia, Siberia, &c.

lost not a particle of his baggage. Being obliged to remain a fortnight among the Ostiacs, upon the river Oby, his baggage lay open in a hut inhabited by a large family, and yet nothing was purloined. The following incident, which he also mentions, is remarkable. A Russian of Tobolski, in the course of a long journey, lodged one night in an Ostiac's hut, and the next day on the road missed his purse with a hundred rubles. His landlord's son, hunting at some distance from the hut, found the purse, but left it there. By his father's order, he covered it with branches, to secure it in case an owner should be found. After three months, the Russian returning, lodged with the same Ostiac; and mentioning occasionally the loss of his purse, the Ostiac, who at first did not recollect his face, cried out with joy, "Art thou the man who lost that purse? my son shall go and shew thee where it lies, that thou mayest take it up with thine own hand." The Hottentots (a) have not the least notion of theft: tho' immoderately fond of tobacco and brandy, they are employed by the Dutch for tending warehouses full of these commodities. Here is an instance of probity above temptation, even among savages in the first stage of social life. Some individuals are more liberally endued than others with virtuous principles: may it not be thought, that in that respect nature has been more kind to the Hottentots than to many other tribes? Spaniards, settled on the sea-coast of Chili, carry on a commerce with neighbouring savages, for bridles, spurs, knives, and other manufactures of

(a) Kolben.

iron ; and in return receive oxen, horses, and even children for slaves. A Spaniard carries his goods there ; and after obtaining liberty to dispose of them, he moves about, and delivers his goods, without the least reserve, to every one who bargains with him. When all is sold, he intimates his departure ; and every purchaser hurries with his goods to him ; and it is not known that any one Indian ever broke his engagement. They give him a guard to carry him safe out of their territory, with all the slaves, horses, and cattle he has purchased. The savages of Brazil are faithful to their promises, and to the treaties they make with the Portuguese. Upon some occasions, they may be accused of error and wrong judgment, but never of injustice nor of duplicity.

While the earth was thinly peopled, plenty of food, procured by hunting and fishing, promoted population ; but as population lessens the stock of animal food, a savage nation, encreasing in numbers, must spread wider and wider for more game. Thus tribes, at first widely separate from each other, approach gradually till they become neighbours. Hence a new scene with respect to morality. Differences about their hunting fields, about their game, about personal injuries, multiply between neighbours ; and every quarrel is blown into a flame, by the aversion men naturally have to strangers. Anger, hatred, and revenge, find now vent, which formerly lay latent without an object : dissocial passions prevail without control, because among savages morality is no match for them ; and cruelty becomes predominant in the human race. Ancient history accordingly is full of enormous cruelties ; witness the incursions of the northern barbarians into the Roman empire ; and witness the incursions
 of

of Genhizcan and Tamerlane into the fertile countries of Asia, spreading destruction with fire and sword, and sparing neither man, woman, nor infant.

Malevolent passions daily exercised against persons of a different tribe, acquiring strength by exercise, came to be vented against persons even of the same tribe ; and the privilege long enjoyed by individuals, of avenging the wrongs done to them, bestowed irresistible force upon such passions (*a*). The history of ancient Greece presents nothing to the reader but usurpations, assassinations, and other horrid crimes. The names of many famous for wickedness, are still preserved ; Atreus, for example, Eteocles, Alcmeon, Phedra, Clytemnestra. The story of Pelops and his descendants, is a chain of criminal horrors : during that period, parricide and incest were ordinary incidents. Euripides represents Medea vowing revenge against her husband Jason, and laying a plot to poison him. Of that infamous plot the chorus expresses their approbation, justifying every woman who, in like circumstances, acts the same part.

The frequent incursions of northern barbarians into the Roman empire, spread desolation and ruin through the whole. The Romans, from the highest polish degenerating into savages, assumed by degrees the cruel and bloody manners of their conquerors ; and the conquerors and conquered, blended into one mass, equalled the grossest barbarians of ancient times in ignorance and brutality. Clovis, King of the Franks, even after his conversion to Christianity, assassinated without remorse his nearest kinsman. The children of

(*a*) See Historical Law-tracts, tract 1.

Clodomir, ann. 530, were assassinated by their two uncles. In the thirteenth century, Ezzelino de Aromano obtained the sovereignty of Padua, by massacring 12,000 of his fellow-citizens. Galeas Sforza, Duke of Milan, was assassinated ann. 1476 in the cathedral church of Milan, after the assassins had put up their prayers for courage to perpetrate the deed. It is a still stronger proof how low morality was in those days, that the Pope himself, Sextus IV. attempted to assassinate the two brothers, Laurent and Julien de Medicis; chusing the elevation of the host as a proper time, when the people would be busy about their devotions. Nay more, that very Pope, with unparalleled impudence, excommunicated the Florentines for doing justice upon the intended assassins. The most sacred oaths were in vain employed as a security against that horrid crime. Childebert II. King of the Franks, enticed Magnovald to his court, by a solemn oath that he should receive no harm: and yet made no difficulty to assassinate him during the gaiety of a banquet. But these instances, however horrid, make no figure compared with the massacre of St Bartholomew, where many thousands were inhumanly and treacherously butchered. Even so late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, assassination was not held in every case to be criminal. Many solicitous applications were made to general councils of Christian clergy, to declare it criminal in every case; but without success. Ferdinand King of Aragon and Navarre, after repeated assassinations and acts of perfidy, obtained the appellation of *Great*: so little authority had the moral sense during those dark ages.

But it is scarce necessary to mention particular instances of the overbearing power of malevolent passions during such ages. An opinion, formerly universal,

universal, that the innocent may be justly involved in the same punishment with the guilty, is of itself irrefragable evidence, that morality once had very little influence when opposed by revenge. There is no moral principle more evident, than that punishment cannot be inflicted with justice but upon the guilty; and yet in Greece, the involving of the innocent with the guilty in the same punishment, was authorised even by positive law. By an Athenian law, a man committing sacrilege, or betraying his country, was banished with all his children (*a*). And when a tyrant was put to death, his children suffered the same fate (*b*). The punishment of treason in Macedon, was extended against the criminal's relations (*c*). Hanno, a citizen of Carthage, formed a plot to enslave his country, by poisoning the whole senate at a banquet. He was tortured to death; and his children, with all his relations, were cut off without mercy, though they had no accession to his guilt. Among the Japanese, a people remarkably ferocious, it is the practice to involve children and relations in the punishment of capital crimes. Even Cicero, the chief man for learning in the most enlightened period of the Roman republic, and a celebrated moralist, approves that practice: “Nec vero me fugit, quam sit acerbum parentum scelera filiorum poenis lui: sed hoc præclare legibus comparatum est, ut caritas liberorum amiciores

(*a*) Meurseus de legibus Atticis, lib. 2. cap. 2.

(*b*) Eod. lib. 2. cap. 15.

(*c*) Quintus Curtius, lib. 6. cap. 11.

“ parentes

“parentes reipublicæ redderet * (a).” In Britain, every one knows, that murder was retaliated, not only against the criminal and his relations, but against his whole clan; a practice so common as to be distinguished by a peculiar name, that of *deadly feud*. As late as the days of King Edmund, a law was made in England, prohibiting deadly feud, except between the relations of the person murdered and the murderer himself.

I embrace the present opportunity to honour the Jews, by observing, that they were the first people we read of, who had correct notions of morality with respect to the present point. The following law is express: “The fathers shall not
“be put to death for the children, neither shall
“the children be put to death for the fathers:
“every man shall be put to death for his own
“sin (b).” Amaziah, King of Judah, gave strict obedience to that law, in avenging his father’s death: “And it came to pass as soon as
“the kingdom was confirmed in his hand,
“that he slew his servants which had slain the
“king his father. But the children of the murderers he slew not; according to that which
“is written in the book of the law of Mo-

* “I am sensible of the hardship of punishing the
“child for the crime of the parent: this, however, is
“a wise enactment of our laws; for hereby the
“parent is bound to the interest of the state by
“the strongest of all ties, the affection to his offspring.”

(a) Ep. 12. ad Brutum.

(b) Deuteronomy xxiv. 16.

“ses.

“ses (a).” There is an elegant passage in Eze-
 kiel to the same purpose (b): “What mean ye,
 “that ye use this proverb concerning the land of
 “Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour
 “grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on
 “edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall
 “not have occasion any more to use this proverb
 “in Israel. The soul that sinneth, it shall die:
 “the son shall not bear the iniquity of the fa-
 “ther, neither shall the father bear the iniquity
 “of the son; the righteousness of the righteous
 “shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the
 “wicked shall be upon him.” Among the Jews
 however, as among other nations, there are in-
 stances without number, of involving innocent
 children and relations in the same punishments
 with the guilty. Such power has revenge, as to
 trample upon conscience, and upon the most ex-
 press laws. Instigated with rage for Nabal’s in-
 gratitude, King David made a vow to God, not
 to leave alive of all who pertained to Nabal any
 that pisseth against the wall. And it was not any
 compunction of conscience that diverted him from
 his cruel purpose, but Nabal’s beautiful wife,
 who pacified him (c). But such contradiction
 between principle and practice, is not peculiar to
 the Jews. We find examples of it in the laws of
 the Roman empire. The true principle of pu-
 nishment is laid down in an edict of the Emperors

(a) 2 Kings, chap. 14.

(b) Chap. 18.

(c) 1 Samuel, chap. 25.

Arcadius and Honorius (b). "Sancimus, ibi esse
 "pœnam, ubi et noxia est. Propinquos, notos,
 "familiares, procul a calumnia submovemus,
 "quos reos sceleris societas non facit. Nec enim
 "ad finitas vel amicitia nefarium crimen admit-
 "tunt. Peccata igitur suos teneant auctores:
 "nec ulterius progrediatur metus quam reperia-
 "tur delictum. Hoc singulis quibusque judici-
 "bus intimetur.*" These very Emperors, with
 respect to treason, which touched them nearer
 than other crimes, talk a very different language.
 After observing, that will and purpose alone with-
 out an overt act, is treason, subjecting the crimi-
 nal to capital punishment, and to forfeiture of all
 that belongs to him, they proceed in the follow-
 ing words (c). "Filiis vero ejus, quibus vitam
 "Imperatoria specialiter lenitate concedimus,
 "(paterno enim deberent perire supplicio, in
 "quibus paterni, hoc est, hereditarii criminis
 "exempla metuuntur), a materna, vel avita,
 "omnium etiam proximorum hereditate ac suc-
 "cessionem, habeantur alieni: testamentis extra-
 "neorum nihil capiant: sint perpetuo egentes et
 "pauperes, infamia eos paterna semper comite-
 "tur, ad nullos prorsus honores, ad nulla sacra-

(b) l. 22. Cod. De pœnis.

* "We ordain, that the punishment of the crime
 "shall extend to the criminal alone. We hold his
 "relations, his friends, and his acquaintances, un-
 "suspected; for intimacy, friendship, or connec-
 "tion, are no proof or argument of guilt. The
 "consequences of the crime shall pursue only its per-
 "petrator. Let this statute be intimated to all our
 "judges."

(c) l. 5. Cod. ad leg. Jul. majest.

“ *menta perveniant : sint postremo tales, ut his,*
 “ *perpetua egestate sordentibus, sit et mors solati-*
 “ *um et vita supplicium*.*”

Human nature is not so perverse, as without veil or disguise to punish a person acknowledged to be innocent. An irregular bias of imagination, which extends the qualities of the principal to its accessories, paves the way to that unjust practice (a). That bias, strengthened by indignation against an atrocious criminal, leads the mind hastily to conclude, that all his connections are partakers of his guilt. In an enlightened age, the clearness of moral principles fetters the imagination from confounding the innocent with the guilty. There remain traces however of that bias, though not carried so far as murder. The sentence pronounced against Ravilliac for assassinating Henry IV. of France, ordains, “ That his house be
 “ *erazed to the ground, and that no other build-*
 “ *ing be ever erected upon that spot.*” Was not

* “ By a special extension of our imperial clemen-
 “ *cy, we allow the sons of the criminal to live ; al-*
 “ *though, in strict justice, being tainted with heredi-*
 “ *tary guilt, they ought to suffer the punishment of*
 “ *their father. But it is our will, that they shall be*
 “ *incapable of all inheritance, either from the mother,*
 “ *the grandfather, or any of their kindred ; that they*
 “ *shall be deprived of the power of inheriting by the*
 “ *testament of a stranger ; that they shall be abandoned*
 “ *to the extreme of poverty and perpetual indigence ;*
 “ *that the infamy of their father shall ever attend*
 “ *them, incapable of honours, and excluded from the*
 “ *participation of religious rites ; that such, in fine,*
 “ *shall be the misery of their condition, that life shall*
 “ *be a punishment, and death a comfort.*”

(a) Elements of Criticism, chap. 2. sect. 5.

this

this in imagination punishing a house for the proprietor's crime?

Murder and assassination are not only destructive in themselves, but, if possible, still more destructive in their consequences. The practice of shedding blood unjustly, and often wantonly, blunts conscience, and paves the way to every crime. This observation is verified in the ancient Greeks: their cruel and sanguinary character, rendered them little regardful of the strict rules of justice. Right was held to depend on power, among men as among wild beasts: it was conceived to be the will of the gods, that superior force should be a lawful title to dominion; "for what right can the weak have to what they cannot defend?" Were that maxim to obtain, a weak man would have no right to liberty nor to life. That impious doctrine was avowed by the Athenians, and publicly asserted by their ambassadors in a conference with the Melians, reported by Thucydides (*a*). Many persons act as if force and right were the same; but a barefaced profession of such a doctrine, is uncommon. In the *Eumenides*, a tragedy of *Eschylus*, *Orestes* is arraigned in the *Areopagus* for killing his mother. *Minerva*, president of the court, decrees in favour of *Orestes*: and for what reason? "Having no Mother myself, the murder of a mother toucheth not me *." In the tragedy of *Electra*,

F 2

(*a*) Lib. 5.

* Athens, from the nature of its government as established by *Solon*, was rendered uncapable of any regular or consistent body of laws. In every case, civil and criminal, the whole people were judges in the
last

lectra, Orestes, consulting the Delphic oracle about means to avenge his father's murder, was enjoined by Apollo to forbear force, but to employ fraud and guile. Obedient to that injunction, Orestes commands his tutor to spread in Argos the news of his death, and to confirm the same with a solemn oath. In Homer, even the great Jupiter makes no difficulty to send a lying dream to Agamemnon, chief of the Greeks. Dissimulation is recommended by the goddess Minerva (*a*). Ulysses declares his detestation at using freedom with truth (*b*): and yet no man deals more in feigned stories (*c*). In the 22d book of the Iliad, Minerva is guilty of gross deceit and treachery to Hector. When he flies from Achilles, she appears to him in the shape of his brother Deiphobus, exhorts him to turn upon Achilles, and promises to assist him. Hector calls upon his brother for another lance; but in vain, for Deiphobus was not there. The Greeks in Homer's time must have been strangely deformed in their morals, when such a story

last resort. And what sort of judges will an ignorant multitude make, who have no guide but passion and prejudice? It is vain to make good laws, when such judges are interpreters. Anacharsis, the Scythian, being present at an assembly of the people, said, "It was singular, that in Athens, wise men pleaded causes, and fools determined them."

(*a*) *Codysey*, book 13.

(*b*) Book 14.

(*c*) Book 14. book 15.

could

could be relished *. A nation begins not to polish nor to advance in morality, till writing be common ; and writing was not known among the Greeks at the siege of Troy. Nor were the morals of that people, as we see, much purified for a long time after writing became common. When Plautus wrote, the Roman system of morals must have been extremely impure. In his play termed *Menæchmi*, a gentleman of fashion having accidentally got into his hands a lady's robe with a gold clasp, instead of returning them to the owner, endeavours to sell them without shame or remorse. Such a scene would not be suffered at present, except among pick-pockets. Both the Greeks and Carthaginians were held by the Romans to be artful and cunning. The Romans continued a plain people, with much simplicity of manners, when the nations mentioned had made great progress in the arts of life ; and it is a sad truth, that morality declines in proportion as a nation polishes. But if the Romans were later than the Greeks and Carthaginians in the arts of life, they soon surpassed them in every sort of immorality. For this change of manners they were indebted to their rapid conquests. The sanguinary disposition both of the Greeks and Romans, appears from another practice, that

* Upon the story of Jupiter being deceived by Juno in the 14th book of the Iliad, Pope says, " That he " knows not a bolder fiction in all antiquity, nor one " that has a greater air of impiety." Pope it would seem was little acquainted with antiquity : for such acts of impiety were common among the Greeks ; and in particular the incident mentioned in the text, is not only more impious, but also a more gross violation of the laws of morality.

of exposing their infant children, which continued till humanity came in some measure to prevail. The practice continues in China to this day, the populousness of the country throwing a veil over the cruelty ; but from the humanity of the Chinese, I conjecture, that the practice will be found rare. The Jews, a cloudy and peevish tribe, much addicted to bloodshed, were miserably defective in moral principles. Take the following examples out of an endless number recorded in the books of the old Testament. Jael, wife of Heber, took under her protection Sisera general of the Canaanites, and engaged her faith for his security. She put him treacherously to death when asleep ; and was applauded by Deborah the prophetess for the meritorious action (*a*). That horrid deed would probably have appeared to her in a different light, had it been committed against Barac, general of the Israelites. David, flying from Saul, took refuge with Achish, King of Gath ; and though protected by that King, made war against the King's allies, saying, that it was against his own countrymen of Judah. “ And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring tidings to Gath. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him : therefore he shall be my servant for ever (*b*).” This was a complication of ingratitude, lying, and treachery. Ziba, by presents to king David, and by defaming his master Mephibosheth, procured from the king a gift of his master's in-

(*a*) Judges iv. 5.

(*b*) : Samuel, xxvii. 11.

heritance; though Mephibosheth had neither trimmed his beard, nor washed his cloaths, from the day the king departed till he returned in peace. " And it came to pass, when Mephibosheth was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth? " And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me; for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame, and he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king. But my lord the king is an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table: what right therefore have I to cry any more unto the king? " David could not possibly atone for his rashness, but by restoring to Mephibosheth his inheritance, and punishing Ziba in an exemplary manner. But hear the sentence: " And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land (a)." The same king, after pardoning Shimei for cursing him, and swearing that he should not die; yet upon his death-bed enjoined his son Solomon to put Shimei to death: " Now therefore hold him not guiltless; but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood (b)." I wish not to be misapprehend-

(a) 2 Samuel, xix. 24.

(b) 1 Kings, ii. 9.

ed, as intending to censure David in particular. If the best king the Jews ever had, was so miserably deficient in morality, what must be thought of the nation in general? When David was lurking to avoid the wrath of Saul, he became acquainted with Nabal, who had a great stock of cattle. "He discharged his followers," says Josephus (*a*), "either for avarice, or hunger, or any pretext whatever, to touch a single hair of them; preaching still on the text of doing justice to all men, in conformity to the will of God, who is not pleased with any man that covets or lays violent hands on the goods of his neighbour." Our author proceeds to acquaint us, that Nabal having refused to supply David with provisions, and having sent back the messengers with a scoffing answer, David in great rage made a vow, that he would destroy Nabal with his house and family. Our author observes, that David's indignation against Nabal, was not so much for his ingratitude, as for the virulence of an insolent outrage against one who had never injured him. And what was the outrage? It was, says our author, that Nabal enquiring who the said David was, and being told that he was one of the sons of Jesse, "Yes, yes," says Nabal, "your run-away servants look upon themselves to be brave fellows, I warrant you." Strange looseness of morals! I mean not David, who was in wrath, but Josephus writing sedately in his closet. He every where celebrates David for his justice and piety, composes for him the very warm exhortation mentioned above: and yet thinks him not guilty

(*a*) Antiquities, book 6.

of any wrong, in vowing to break every rule of justice and humanity, upon so slight a provocation as a scoffing expression, such as no man of temper will regard.

European nations, who originally were fierce and sanguinary like the Greeks and Jews, had the same cloudy and uncorrect notions of right and wrong. It is scarce necessary to give instances, the low state of morality during the dark ages of Christianity being known to all. In the time of Louis XI. of France, promises and engagements were utterly disregarded, till they were sanctified by a solemn oath: nor were such oaths long regarded; they lost their force, and were not relied on more than simple promises. All faith among men seemed to be at an end. Even those who appeared the most scrupulous about character, were however ready to grasp at any subterfuge to excuse their breach of engagement. And it is a still stronger proof of self-deceit, that such subterfuges were frequently prepared beforehand, in order to furnish an excuse. It was a common practice some ages ago, to make private protestations, which were thought sufficient to relieve men in conscience from being bound by a solemn treaty. Charles, afterward Emperor of Germany, during his minority, gave authority to declare publicly his accession to a treaty of peace, between his grandfather Maximilian and the King of France: but at the same time protested privately, before a notary and witnesses, “ That notwithstanding his public accession to the said treaty, it was not his intention
“ to be bound by every article of it; and particularly, that the clause reserving to the King
“ of France the sovereignty of certain territories
“ in the Netherlands, should not be binding.” Is it possible Charles could be so blind, as not to

see, that such practice, if it have any effect, must destroy all faith among men? What better was this than what was practised by Robert King of France in the tenth century, to free his subjects from the guilt of perjury? They swore upon a box of relics, out of which the relics were privately taken. Correa, a Portuguese general, made a treaty with the King of Pegu; and it was agreed, that each party should swear to observe the treaty, laying his hand upon the sacred book of his religion. Correa swore upon a collection of songs, and by that vile stratagem thought that he was not bound. The inhabitants of Britain were so loose formerly, that a man was not reckoned safe in his own house, without a mastiff to protect him from violence. Mastiffs were permitted even to those who dwelt within the king's forests; and to prevent danger to the deer, there was in England a court for *Lawing* or *expeditation* of mastives, *i. e.* for cutting off the claws of their fore-feet, to prevent them from running (a). The trial and condemnation of Charles I. in a pretended court of justice, however audacious and unconstitutional, was yet an effort toward regularity and order. In the preceding age, the king would have been taken off by assassination or poison. Every prince in Europe had an officer whose province it was to secure his master against poison. A lady was appointed to that office by Queen Elizabeth of England; and the form was, to give to each of the servants a mouthful to eat of the dish he brought in. Poison must have been frequent in those days, to make such a regulation necessary. To vouch still more clearly the low ebb of morality during that

(a) Carta de Foresta, cap. 6.

period, seldom it happened that a man of figure died suddenly, or of an unusual disease, but poison was suspected. Men conscious of their own vicious disposition, are prone to suspect others. The Dauphin, son to Francis I. of France, a youth of about eighteen, having overheated himself at play, took a great draught of iced water, and died of a pleurisy in five days. The death was sudden, but none is more natural. The suspicion however of poison was universal; and Montecuculi, who attended the young prince, was formally condemned to death and executed for it; for no better reason, than that he had at all times ready access to the prince.

Considering the low state of morality where dissocial passions bear rule, as in the scenes now displayed, one would require a miracle to recover mankind out of such anarchy. But, as observed above (a), Providence brings order out of confusion. The intolerable distress of a state of things where a promise, or even an oath, is a rope of sand, and where all are set against all (b), made people at last sensible, that they must either renounce society altogether, or qualify themselves for it, by checking their dissocial passions. Finding from experience, that the gratification of social affections exceeds greatly that of cruelty and revenge, men endeavoured to acquire a habit of self-command, and of restraining their stormy passions. The necessity of fulfilling every moral duty was recognised: men listened to conscience, the voice of God in their hearts: and the moral sense was cordially submitted to, as the ultimate

(a) Book 2. sketch 1.

(b) Hobbes.

judge in all matters of right and wrong. Salutory laws and steady government contributed to perfect that glorious revolution: private conviction alone would not have been effectual, not at least in many ages.

From that revolution is derived what is termed *the law of nations*, meaning certain regulations dictated by the moral sense in its maturity. The laws of our nature refine gradually as our nature refines. The putting an enemy to death in cold blood, is averse to improved nature, though common while barbarity prevailed. It is held infamous to use poisoned weapons, though the moral sense made little opposition while rancour and revenge were ruling passions. Aversion against strangers is taught to vary its object, from individuals to the nation that is our enemy: I bear enmity against France; but dislike not any one Frenchman, being conscious that it is the duty of subjects to serve their king and country *. In distributing justice, we make no distinction between natives and foreigners: if any partiality be indulged, it is in favour of the helpless stranger.

But cruelty is not the only antagonist to morality. There is another, less violent indeed, but more cunning and undermining; and that is the hoarding-appetite. Before money was introduced, that appetite was extremely faint: in the first stage of civil society, men are satisfied with plain necessities; and having these in plenty, they think

* In one of our ill-concerted descents upon France during the late war, signal humanity appeared, in forbearing to burn a manufactory of sails and ropes, belonging to the King; because it would have destroyed an adjoining building of the same kind belonging to a private manufacturer.

not of providing against want. But money is a species of property, so universal in operation, and so permanent in value, as to rouse the appetite for hoarding : love of money excites industry ; and the many beautiful productions of industry, magnificent houses, splendid gardens, rich garments, inflame the appetite to an extreme. In the thirteenth century, so obscured was the moral sense by rapacity and avarice, that robbery on the high-way, and the coining false money, were in Germany held to be privileges of great lords. That perjury was common in the city of London, especially among jurymen, makes a preamble in more than one statute of Henry VII. In the *Dance of Death*, translated from the French in the said king's reign, with additions adapted to English manners, a jurymen is introduced, who, influenced by bribes, had often given a false verdict. And the sheriff was often suspected as accessory to the crime, by returning for jurymen persons of a bad character. Carew, in his account of Cornwall, says, that it was an ordinary article in an attorney's bill, to charge *pro amicitia vicecomitis* *. Perjury in jurors of the city of London, is greatly complained of. Stow informs us, that, in the year 1468, many jurors of that city were punished, and papers fixed on their heads, declaring their offence, of being corrupted by the parties to the suit. He complains of that corruption as flagrant in the reign of Elizabeth, when he wrote his account of London. Fuller, in his *English Worthies*, mentions it as a proverbial saying, " That London juries hang half, " and save half." Grafton, in his *Chronicle*,

* " For the friendship of the sheriff."

mentions, that the chancellor of the Bishop of London being indicted for murder, the Bishop wrote a letter to Cardinal Wolsey, begging his interposition for having the prosecution stopt, "because London juries were so corrupted, that they would find Abel guilty of the murder of Cain." In that period, the morals of the English were in every particular extremely loose. We learn from Strype's annals (a), that in the county of Somerset alone, forty persons were executed in one year for robbery, theft, and other felonies, thirty-five burnt in the hand, thirty-seven whipped, one hundred and eighty-three discharged, though most wicked and desperate persons; and yet that the fifth part of the felonies committed in that county were not brought to trial, either from cunning in the felons, indolence in the magistrate, or foolish lenity in the people; that other counties were in no better condition, and many in a worse; and that commonly there were three or four hundred able-bodied vagabonds in every county, who lived by theft and rapine. Harrisson computes, that in the reign of Henry VIII. seventy-two thousand thieves and rogues were hanged; and that in Elizabeth's time there were only hanged yearly between three and four hundred for theft and robbery. At present, there are not forty hanged in a year for these crimes. The same author reports, that in the reign of Elizabeth, there were computed to be in England ten thousand gypsies. In the year 1601, complaints were made in parliament, of the rapine of the justices of peace; and a member said, that this magistrate was an animal, who, for half a dozen of chickens, would dispense with a dozen

(a) Vol. 4.

of penal statutes. The people of Whidah, in Guinea, are much addicted to pilfering. Bosman was told by the King, "That his subjects were not like those of Ardrah, who on the slightest umbrage will poison an European. This, says he, you have no reason to apprehend here : but take care of your goods ; for so expert are my people at thieving, that they will steal from you while you are looking on." The Caribbeans, who know no wants but what nature inspires, are amazed at the industry of the Europeans in amassing wealth. Listen to one of them expostulating with a Frenchman in the following terms : "How miserable art thou, to expose thy person to tedious and dangerous voyages and to suffer thyself to be oppressed with anxiety about futurity ! An inordinate appetite for wealth is thy bane ; and yet thou art no less tormented in preserving the goods thou hast acquired, than in acquiring more : fear of robbery or shipwreck suffers thee not to enjoy a quiet moment. Thus thou growest old in thy youth, thy hair turns gray, thy forehead is wrinkled, a thousand ailments afflict thy body, a thousand distresses surround thy heart, and thou movest with painful hurry to the grave. Why art thou not content with what thy own country produceth ? Why not condemn superfluities, as we do ?"

To control the hoarding appetite, which when inflamed is the bane of civil society, the God of nature has provided two efficacious principles ; the moral sense, and the sense of property. The hoarding appetite, it is true, is more and more inflamed by beautiful productions in the progress of art : but, on the other hand, the senses mentioned growing to maturity, have a commanding influence over the actions of men ; and, when
cherished

cherished in a good government, are a sufficient counterbalance to the hoarding appetite. The ancient Egyptians enjoyed for ages the blessings of good government; and moral principles were among them carried to a greater degree of refinement, than at present even in our courts of equity. It was made the duty of every one, to succour those who were unjustly attacked: even passengers were not exempted. A regulation among them, that a man could not be imprisoned for debt, was well suited to the tenor of their laws and manners: it could not have taken place but among an honest and industrious people. In old Rome, though remarkable for temperance and austerity of manners, a debtor could be imprisoned, and even sold as a slave, for payment of the debt; but the Patricians were the creditors, and the poor Plebeians were held in woful subjection*. The moderation

* A bankrupt in England who pays three fourths of his debt, and obtains a certificate of his good behaviour, is discharged of all the debts contracted by him before his bankruptcy. Such regulation was perhaps not unsuitable to the moderation and frugality of the period when it was made. But luxury and external show, have now become our ruling passions; and to supply our extravagance, money must be procured at any rate. Trade in particular has degenerated into a species of gaming; men venturing their all, in hopes of a lucky hit to elevate them above their neighbours. And did they only venture their own, the case would not be deplorable; they venture all they can procure upon credit; and by that means, reduce to beggary many an innocent family: with respect to themselves, they know the worst of it, which is to be cleared from their debts by a certificate. The morals of our people are indeed at so low an ebb, as to require the most severe laws against bankruptcy. When a man borrows a sum, it is implied in the covenant, that all his effects

moderation of the inhabitants of Hamburgh, and their public spirit, kept in vigour by a free government, preserve morality among them entire from taint or corruption. I give an illustrious instance. Instead of a tax upon trade or riches, every merchant puts privately into the public chest, what he thinks ought to be his contribution : the total sum seldom falls short of expectation ; and among that numerous body of men, not one is suspected of contributing less than his proportion. But luxury has not yet got footing in that city. A climate not kindly, and a soil not fertile, enured the Swiss to temperance and to

sects present and future shall lie open to the creditor ; for which reason, it is contradictory to justice, that a creditor should be forced to discharge his debtor without obtaining complete payment. Many debtors, it is true, deserve favour ; but it ought to be left to the humanity of creditors, and not to be forced from them by law. The debtor, at the same time, may be safely left to the humanity of his creditors : for if he have conducted his affairs with strict integrity, and with any degree of prudence, there will scarce be found one man so hard-hearted, as to stand out against the laudable and benevolent intentions of his fellow-creditors. Nay, if he have any regard to character, he dares not stand out : he would be held as a monster, and be abhorred by all the world. To leave a bankrupt thus to the mercy of his creditors, would produce the most salutary effects. It would excite men to be strictly just in their dealings, and put an end to gaming, so destructive to credit ; because misbehaviour in any of these particulars would set the whole creditors against their debtor, and leave him no hope of favour. In the late bankrupt-statute for Scotland, accordingly, the clause concerning the certificate was wisely left out, as unsuitable to the depraved manners of the present times.

virtue. Patriotism continues their ruling passion: they are fond of serving their country; and are honest and faithful to each other: a law-suit among them is a wonder; and a door is seldom shut unless to keep out cold.

The hurtful effects of the hoarding appetite with respect to individuals, make no figure compared with its poisonous influence upon the public, in every state enriched by conquest or by commerce; which I have had more than one opportunity to mention. Overflowing riches unequally distributed, multiply artificial wants beyond all bounds: they eradicate patriotism: they foster luxury, sensuality, and selfishness, which are commonly gratified at the expence even of justice and honour. The Athenians were early corrupted by opulence; to which every thing was made subservient. "It is an oracle," says the chorus in the *Agamemnon* of *Eschylus*, "that is not purchased with money." During the infancy of a nation, vice prevails from imbecility in the moral sense: in the decline of a nation, it prevails from the corruption of affluence.

In a small state, there is commonly much virtue at home, and much violence abroad. The Romans were to their neighbours more baneful than famine or pestilence; but patriotism in them occasioned great integrity at home. An oath when given to fortify an engagement with a fellow-citizen, was more sacred at Rome than in any other part of the world (*a*). The censorian office cannot succeed but among a virtuous people; because its rewards and punishments have no influence but upon those who are ashamed of

(*a*) *L'Esprit des loix*, liv. 8. ch. 13.

* In the fifteenth century, the French clergy from the pulpit censured public transactions, and even the conduct of their king, as our British clergy did in the days of Charles I. and II. They assumed the privilege of a Roman censor ; but they were not men of such authority as to do any good in a corrupted nation.

cree,

cree, conferring on the consuls the usual proconsular appointments. And yet the law made in the comitia, and the decree in the senate, were pure fictions, never even spoken of. Infamous as this transaction was, Memmius, to answer some political purpose, was not ashamed to divulge it to the senate. This same Memmius, however, continued to be Cicero's correspondent, and his professed friend. *Proh tempora! proh mores!* But power and riches were at that time ruling passions and the principles of morality were very little regarded.

It is needless to dissemble, that selfishness, sensuality, and avarice, must in England be the fruits of great opulence, as in every other country; and that morality cannot maintain its authority against such undermining antagonists. Custom-house-oaths have become so familiar among us, as to be swallowed without a wry face; and is it certain, that bribery and perjury in electing parliament-members, are not approaching to the same cool state? In the infancy of morality, a promise makes but a slight impression: to give it force, it is commonly accompanied with many solemnities (a); and in treaties between sovereigns, even these solemnities are not relied on without a solemn oath. When morality arrives at maturity, the oath is thought unnecessary; and at present, morality is so much on the decline, that a solemn oath is not more relied on, than a simple promise was originally. Laws have been made to prevent such immorality, but in vain: because none but patriots have an interest to support them; and when patriotism is banished by corruption, there is no remaining spring in govern-

(a) See Historical Law-tracts, tract 2.

ment to make them effectual. The statutes made against gaming, and against bribery and corruption in elections, have no authority over a degenerate people. Nothing is studied, but how to evade the penalties ; and supposing statutes to be made without end for preventing known evasions, new evasions will spring up in their stead. The misery is, that such laws, if they prove abortive, are never innocent with regard to consequences ; for nothing is more subversive of morality as well as of patriotism, than a habit of disregarding the laws of our country *.

But pride sometimes happily interposes to stem the tide of corruption. The poor are not ashamed

* Lying and perjury are not in every case equally criminal ; at least are not commonly reckoned so. Lying or perjury, in order to injure a man, is held highly criminal ; and the greater the hurt, the greater the crime. To relieve from punishment, few boggle at a lie or at perjury : sincerity is not even expected ; and hence the practice of torture. Many men are not scrupulous about oaths, when they have no view but to obtain justice to themselves : the Jacobites, that they might not be deprived of their privileges as British subjects, made no great difficulty to swallow oaths to the present government, though in them it was perjury. It is dangerous to withdraw the smallest peg in the moral edifice ; for the whole will totter and tumble. Men creep on to vice by degrees. Perjury, in order to support a friend, has become customary of late years ; witness fictitious qualifications in the electors of parliament-men, which are made effectual by perjury : yet such is the degeneracy of the present times, that no man is the worse thought of upon that account. We must not flatter ourselves that the poison will reach no farther ; a man who boggles not at perjury to serve a friend, will in time become such an adept, as to commit perjury in order to ruin a friend when he becomes an enemy.

ed to take a bribe from the rich ; nor weak states from those that are powerful, disguised only under the name of *subsidy* or *pension*. Both France and England have been in the practice of securing the alliance of some foreign princes by pensions ; and it is natural in the ministers of a pensioned prince, to receive a gratification for keeping their master to his engagement. England never was at any time so inferior to France, as to suffer their king to accept a pension, whatever private transactions might be between the kings themselves. But the ministers of England thought it no disparagement, to receive pensions from France. Every minister of Edward IV. of England received a pension from Louis XI. ; and they made no difficulty of granting a receipt accordingly. The old Earl of Warwick, says Commynes, was the only exception : he took the money, but refused a receipt. Cardinal Wolsey had a pension both from the Emperor and from the King of France : and his master Henry was vain, that his minister was so much regarded by the first powers in Europe. During the reigns of Charles II. and of his brother James, England made so despicable a figure, that the ministers accepted pensions from Louis XIV. A king void of virtue was never well served. King Charles, most disgracefully accepted a pension from France ? what scruple could his ministers have ? Britain, governed by a king eminently virtuous and patriotic, makes at present so great a figure, that even the lowest minister would disdain a pension from any foreign prince. Men formerly were so blind as not to see, that a pension creates a bias in a minister, against his master and his country. At present, men are so quick-sighted as clearly to see, that a foreign pension to a minister is no better than a bribe ; and it would be held so by all the world.

In

In a nation enriched by conquest or commerce, where selfish passions always prevail, it is difficult to stem the tide of immorality : the decline of virtue may be retarded by wholesome regulations ; but no regulations will ever restore it to its meridian vigour. Marcus Aurelius, Emperor of Rome, caused statues to be made of all the brave men who figured in the Germanic war. It has long been a practice in China, to honour persons eminent for virtue, by feasting them annually at the Emperor's expence. A late Emperor made an improvement : he ordered reports to be sent him annually, of men and women who when alive had been remarkable for public spirit or private virtue, in order that monuments might be erected to their memory. The following report is one of many that were sent to the Emperor. “ According to the order of your Majesty, “ for erecting monuments to the honour of wo- “ men, who have been celebrated for conti- “ nence, for filial piety, or for purity of man- “ ners, the viceroy of Canton reports, that in “ the town of Sinhoei, a beautiful young wo- “ man, named *Leang*, sacrificed her life to save “ her chastity. In the fifteenth year of our Em- “ peror Canghi, she was dragged by pirates into “ their ship ; and having no other way to es- “ cape their brutal lust, she threw herself head- “ long into the sea. Being of opinion, that to “ prefer honour before life is an example worthy “ of imitation, we purpose, according to your “ Majesty's order, to erect a triumphal arch for “ that young woman, and to engrave her story “ upon a large stone, that it may be preserved “ in perpetual remembrance.” At the foot of the report is written, *The Emperor approves.* Pity it is, that such regulations should ever prove abortive, for their purpose is excellent. But they

they would need angels to put them in execution. Every deviation from a just selection enervates them; and frequent deviations render them a subject of ridicule. But how are deviations to be prevented, when men are the judges? Those who distribute the rewards will prefer their friends, and overlook those of greater merit. Like the censorian power in Rome, such regulations, after many abuses, will sink into contempt.

Two errors, which infested morality in dark times, have occasioned much injustice; and I am not certain, that they are yet totally eradicated. The first is an opinion, That an action derives its quality of right and wrong from the event, without regard to intention. The other is, That the end justifies the means; or, in other words, That means, otherwise unlawful, may be lawfully employed to bring about a good end. With an account of these two errors, I shall close the present historical sketch.

That intention is the circumstance which qualifies an action, and its author, to be criminal or innocent, is made evident in the first part of the present sketch, and is now admitted to be so by every moral writer. But rude and barbarous nations seldom carry their thoughts beyond what falls under their external senses: they conclude an action to be right that happens to do good, and an action to be wrong that happens to do harm; without ever thinking of motives, of will, of intention, or of any circumstance that is not obvious to eye-sight. From many passages in the Old Testament it appears, that the external act only, with its consequences, were regarded. Isaac, imitating his father Abraham, made his wife Rebecca pass for his sister. Abimelech, King of the Philistines, having discovered the
imposture,

imposture, said to Isaac, "What is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us (a)."

Jonathan was condemned to die for transgressing a prohibition he never heard of (b). A sin of ignorance, *i. e.* an action done without ill intention, required a sacrifice of expiation (c). Saul being defeated by the Philistines, fell on his own sword: the wound not being mortal, he prevailed on a young Amalekite, to pull out the sword, and to dispatch him with it. Josephus (d) says, that David ordered the criminal to be delivered up to justice as a regicide.

The Greeks appear to have wavered greatly about intention, sometimes holding it essential to a crime, and sometimes disregarding it as a circumstance of no moment. Of these contradictory opinions we have pregnant evidence in the two tragedies of Oedipus; the first taking it for granted, that a crime consists entirely in the external act and its consequences; the other holding intention to be indispensable. Oedipus had killed his father Laius, and married his mother Jocasta; but without any criminal intention, being ignorant of his relation to them. And yet history informs us, that the gods punished the Thebans with pestilence, for suffering a wretch so grossly criminal to live. Sophocles, author of both tragedies, puts the following words in the mouth of Tiresias the prophet.

(a) Genesis, chap. 26.

(b) 1 Samuel, xiv. 44.

(c) Leviticus, chap. 4.

(d) Book 3. of Antiquities.

————— Know then,
 That Oedipus, in shameful bonds united,
 With those he loves, unconscious of his guilt,
 Is yet most guilty.

And that doctrine is espoused by Aristotle in a later period, who holding Oedipus to have been deeply criminal, though without intention, is of opinion, that a more proper subject for tragedy never was brought upon the stage. Nay as a philosopher he talks currently of an involuntary crime. Orestes, in Euripides, acknowledges himself to be guilty in killing his mother ; yet asserts with the same breath, that his crime was inevitable, a necessary crime, a crime commanded by religion.

In Oedipus Coloneus, the other tragedy mentioned, a very different proposition is maintained. A defence is made for that unlucky man, agreeable to sound moral principles, that, having had no bad intention, he was entirely innocent ; and that his misfortunes ought to be ascribed to the wrath of the gods.

Thou who upbraid'st me thus for all my woes,
 Murder and incest, which against my will
 I had committed ; so it pleas'd the gods,
 Offended at my race for former crimes.

But I am guiltless ; can'st thou name a fault
 Deserving this ? For, tell me, was it mine,
 When to my father, Phœbus did declare,
 That he should one day perish by the hand
 Of his own child ; was Oedipus to blame,
 Who had no being then ? If, born at length
 To wretchedness, he met his sire unknown,
 And slew him, that involuntary deed
 Can'st thou condemn ? And for my fatal marriage,

Dost thou not blush to name it ? was not she

Thy

Thy sister, she who bore me, ignorant
And guileless woman! afterwards my wife,
And mother to my children? What she did,
she did unknowing.

But, not for that, nor for my murder'd father,
Have I deserv'd thy bitter taunts: for, tell me,
Thy life attack'd, wouldst thou have staid to ask
Th' assassin, if he were thy father? No;
Self-love would urge thee to revenge the insult.
Thus was I drove to ill by th' angry gods;
This, shou'd my father's soul revisit earth,
Himself would own, and pity Oedipus.

Again, in the fourth act, the following prayer is
put up for Oedipus by the chorus.

————— O grant,
That not oppress'd by tort'ring pain
Beneath the stroke of death he linger long;
But swift, with easy steps, descend to Styx's
drear abode;
For he hath led a life of toil and pain;
May the just gods repay his undeserved woe.

The audience was the same in both plays. Did
they think Oedipus to be guilty in the one play,
and innocent in the other? If they did not,
how could both plays be relished? if they did,
they must have been grossly stupid.

The statues of a Roman Emperor were held
so sacred, that to treat them with any contempt
was high treason. This ridiculous opinion was
carried so far out of common sense, that a man
was held guilty of high treason, if a stone thrown
by him happened accidentally to touch one of
these statues. And the law continued in force
till abrogated by a rescript of Severus Antoni-
nus (a).

(a) l. 5. ad leg. Jul. Majest.

In England, so little was intention regarded, that casual homicide, and even homicide in self-defence, were capitally punished. It requires strong evidence to vouch so absurd a law; and I have the strongest, viz. the act of 52^o Henry III. cap. 26. converting the capital punishment into a forfeiture of moveables. The same gross blunder continued much longer to be law in Scotland. By act 19. parl. 1649, renewed act 22. parl. 1661, the capital punishment is converted to imprisonment, or a fine to the wife and children. In a period so late as the Restoration, strange blindness it was, not to perceive, that homicide in self-defence, being a lawful act, justified by the strictest rules of morality, subjects not a man to punishment, more than the defending his property against a robber; and that casual homicide, meaning homicide committed innocently without ill intention, may subject him to reparation, but never to any punishment, mild or severe.

The Jesuits in their doctrines seem to rest on the external act, disregarding intention. It is with them a matter of perfect indifference, from what motive men obey the laws of God; and that the service of those who obey from fear of punishment, is no less acceptable to the Deity, than of those who obey from a principle of love*.

* External show made a great figure, when nothing was regarded but what is visible. By acuteness of judgment, and refinement of taste, the pleasures of society prevail, and forms and ceremonies are disregarded. External show, however, continues to stand its ground in several instances. It occasions, in particular, many an ill-sorted match: a young man is apt to be captivated with beauty or dress; a young woman with equipage, or a title.

The

The other error mentioned above, is, That the end justifies the means. In defence of that proposition, it is urged, that the character of the means is derived from the end; that every action must be right which contributes to a good end, and that every action must be wrong which contributes to an ill end. But those who reason thus, ought first to consider, whether reasoning be at all applicable to the present subject. Reason is the true touchstone of truth and falsehood; but the moral sense is the only touchstone of right and wrong; and to maintain, that reason is our guide in judging of right and wrong, is no less absurd than to maintain, that the moral sense is our guide in judging of truth and falsehood. The moral sense dictates, that on no pretext whatever is it lawful to do an act of injustice, or any wrong (*a*): and men, conscious that the moral sense governs in matters of right and wrong, submit implicitly to its dictates. Influenced however by the reasoning mentioned, during the nonage of the moral sense, men did wrong currently in order to bring about a good end; witness pretended miracles and forged writings, urged without reserve by every sect of Christians against their antagonists. And I am sorry to observe, that the error is not totally eradicated: missionaries employed in converting infidels to the true faith, are little scrupulous about the means: they make no difficulty to feign prodigies in order to convert those who are not moved by argument. Such pious frauds tend to sap the very foundations of morality.

(*a*) See the first part of this sketch, sect. 2. at the end.

S K E T C H I I I .

Principles and Progress of THEOLOGY.

AS no branch of knowledge can vie with theology, either in dignity or importance, it justly claims to be a favourite study with every person endued with true taste and solid judgment. From the time that writing was invented, natural religion has employed pens without number ; and yet in no language is there found a complete history of it. That task is far above my abilities : I propose only a slight sketch ; which I shall glory in, however imperfect, if it excite any one of superior talents to undertake a task so arduous.

C H A P. I .

Existence of a D E I T Y .

THAT there are beings, one or many, powerful above men, has been generally believed among the various tribes of men : I may say universally believed, notwithstanding what is reported

reported of some gross savages ; for reports repugnant to the common nature of man, require more able vouchers than a few illiterate voyagers. Among many savage tribes, there are no words but for objects of external sense : is it surprising, that such people are incapable to express their religious perceptions, or any perception of internal sense ? and from their silence can it be fairly presumed, that they have no such perception * ? The belief of superior powers, in every country where there are words to express it, is so well vouched, that in fair reasoning it ought to be taken for granted among the few tribes where language is deficient. Even the grossest idolatry affords to me evidence of that belief. No nation can be so brutish as to worship a stock or a stone, merely as such. The visible object is always imagined to be connected with some invisible power ; and the worship paid to the former, is as representing the latter, or as in some manner connected with it. Every family among the ancient Lithuanians, entertained a real serpent as a household god ; and the same practice is at present universal, among the negroes in the kingdom of Whidah : it is not the serpent that is worshipped, but some deity imagined to reside in it. The ancient Egyptians were not idiots, to pay divine honours to a bull

* In the language even of Peru, there is not a word for expressing an abstract idea, such as *time, endurance, space, existence, substance, matter, body*. It is no less defective in expressing moral ideas, such as *virtue, justice, gratitude, liberty*. The Yameos, a tribe on the river Oroonoko, described by Condamine, use the word *poettarraroincouroac* to express the number three, and have no word for a greater number. The Brazilian language is nearly as barren.

or a cat, as such : the divine honours were paid to a deity, as residing in these animals. The sun is to man a familiar object : as it is frequently obscured by clouds, and totally eclipsed during night, a savage readily conceives it to be a great fire sometimes flaming bright, sometimes obscured, and sometimes extinguished. Whence then sun-worship, once universal among savages ? Plainly from the same cause : it is not properly the sun that is worshipped, but a deity who is supposed to dwell in that luminary.

Taking it then for granted, that our belief of superior powers has been long universal, the important question is, From what cause it proceeds. A belief so universal, and so permanent, cannot proceed from chance, but must have a cause operating constantly and invariably upon all men in all ages. Philosophers, who believe the world to be eternal and self-existent, and imagine it to be the only deity, though without intelligence, endeavour to account for our belief of superior powers, from the terror that thunder and other elementary convulsions raise in savages ; and thence conclude that such belief is no evidence of a deity. Thus Lucretius,

Præterea, cui non animus formidine divum
 Contrahitur ? cui non conripunt membra
 pavore,
 Fulminis horribili cum plaga torrida tellus
 Contremittit, et magnum percurrunt murmura
 cælum * (a) ?

And

(a) Lib. 5.

* What man can boast, that firm undaunted soul,
 That hears, unmov'd, when thunder shakes the
 pole ;

Nor

And Petronius Arbiter,

Primus in orbe deos fecit timor : ardua cœlo
Fulmina quum caderent discussaue mœnia
flammis,
Atque ictus flagraret Athos †.

Man, during infancy a defenceless animal, is endued on that account with a large portion of fear. Savages, grossly ignorant of causes and effects, take fright at every unusual appearance, and recur to some malignant power as the cause. Now, if the authors quoted mean only, that the first perception of deity among savages is occasioned by fear, I heartily subscribe to their opinion. But if it was their meaning, that such perceptions proceed from fear solely, without having any other cause, I wish to be informed, from what source is derived the belief we have of superior benevolent beings. Fear cannot be the source : and it will be seen anon, that though malevolent deities were first recognised among savages ; yet that in the progress of society, the existence of benevolent deities was universally believed. The fact is certain ; and therefore fear is not the sole

Nor shrinks with fear of an offended pow'r,
When lightnings flash, and storms and tempests
roar ?

† When dread convulsions rock'd the lab'ring
earth,
And livid clouds first gave the thunder birth,
Instinctive fear within the human breast
The first ideas of a God impress'd.

cause of our believing the existence of superior beings.

It is beside to me evident, that the belief even of malevolent deities, once universal among all the tribes of men, cannot be accounted for from fear solely. I observe, first, That there are many men, to whom an eclipse, an earthquake, and even thunder are unknown : Egypt in particular, though the country of superstition, is little or not at all acquainted with the two latter. Nor do such appearances strike terror into every one who is acquainted with them. The universality of the belief, must then have some cause more universal than fear. I observe next, That if the belief were founded solely on fear, it would die away gradually as men improve in the knowledge of causes and effects. Instruct a savage, that thunder, an eclipse, an earthquake, proceed from natural causes, and are not threatenings of an incensed deity ; his fear of malevolent beings will vanish ; and with it his belief in them, if founded solely on fear. Yet the direct contrary is true : in proportion as the human understanding ripens, our belief of superior powers, or of a Deity, turns more and more firm and authoritative ; which will be made evident in the chapter immediately following.

Philosophers of more enlarged views, and of deeper penetration, may possibly think, that the operations of nature, and the government of this world, which loudly proclaim a Deity, may be sufficient to open the eyes of the grossest savages, and to convince them that there is a Deity. And to give due weight to the argument, I shall relate a conversation between a Greenlander and a Danish missionary, mentioned by Crantz in his history of Greenland. “ It is true,” says the Greenlander, “ we were ignorant Heathens, and knew
“ little

“ little of a God, till you came. But you must
“ not imagine, that no Greenlander thinks about
“ these things. A kajak (*a*), with all its tackle
“ and implements, cannot exist but by the la-
“ bour of man; and one who does not under-
“ stand it, would spoil it. But the meanest bird
“ requires more skill than the best kajak; and
“ no man can make a bird. There is still more
“ skill required to make a man: by whom then
“ was he made? He proceeded from his pa-
“ rents, and they from their parents. But some
“ must have been the first parents: whence did
“ they proceed? Common report says, that
“ they grew out of the earth: if so, why do
“ not men still grow out of the earth? And
“ from whence came the earth itself, the sun,
“ the moon, the stars? Certainly there must
“ be some being who made all these things, a
“ being more wise than the wisest man.” The
reasoning here from effects to their causes, is sta-
ted with great precision; and were all men equal-
ly penetrating with the Greenlander, such reason-
ing might perhaps be sufficient to account for the
belief of Deity, universally spread among all sa-
vages. But such penetration is a rare quality
among savages; and yet the belief of superior
powers is universal, not excepting even the gross-
est savages, who are altogether incapable of rea-
soning like our Greenland philosopher. Natural
history has made so rapid a progress of late years,
and the finger of God is so visible to us in the va-
rious operations of nature, that we do not readily
conceive how even savages can be ignorant: but
it is a common fallacy in reasoning, to judge of
others by what we feel in ourselves. And to

(*a*) A Greenland boat.

give

give juſter notions of the condition of ſavages, I take the liberty to introduce the Wogultzoi, a people in Siberia, as exhibiting a ſtriking picture of ſavages in their natural ſtate. That people were baptized at the command of Prince Gagarin, governor of the province; and Laurent Lange, in his relation of a journey from Peterſburgh to Pekin ann. 1715, gives the following account of their converſion. “ I had curioſity,” ſays he, “ to queſtion them about their worſhip before they embraced Chriſtianity. They ſaid, that they had an idol hung upon a tree, before which they proſtrated themſelves, raiſing their eyes to heaven, and howling with a loud voice. They could not explain what they meant by howling; but only that every man howled in his own faſhion. Being interrogated, Whether, in raiſing their eyes to heaven, they knew that a god is there, who ſees all the actions, and even the thoughts of men; they answered ſimply, That heaven is too far above them to know whether a god be there or not; and that they had no care but to provide meat and drink. Another queſtion was put, Whether they had not more ſatisfaction in worſhipping the living God, than they formerly had in the darkneſs of idolatry; they answered, We ſee no great difference; and we do not break our heads about ſuch matters.” Judge how little capable ſuch ignorant ſavages are, to reaſon from effects to their cauſes, and to trace a Deity from the operations of nature. And it may be added with great certainty, that could they be made in any degree to conceive ſuch reaſoning, yet ſo weak and obſcure would their conviction be, as to reſt there without moving them to any ſort of worſhip; which however
among

among savages goes hand in hand with the belief of superior powers.

To sum up this argument : As fear is a cause altogether insufficient for the belief of Deity, universal among all tribes ; and as reasoning from effects to their causes can have no influence upon ignorant savages ; what cause remains but nature itself ? To make this belief universal, the image of the Deity must be stamped upon the mind of every human being, the ignorant equally with the knowing : nothing less is sufficient. And the perception we have of Deity must proceed from an internal cause, which may be termed the *sense of Deity*.

Included in the sense of Deity, is the duty we are under to worship him. And to enforce that duty, the principle of devotion is made a part of our nature. All men accordingly agree in worshipping superior beings, however they may differ in the mode of worship. And the universality of such worship, proves devotion to be an innate principle.

The perception we have of being accountable beings, arises from another branch of the sense of Deity. We expect approbation from the Deity when we do right ; and dread punishment from him when guilty of any crime ; not excepting the most occult crimes, hid from every mortal eye. From what cause can dread proceed in that case, but from belief of a superior being, avenger of wrongs ? That dread, when immoderate, disorders the mind, and makes every unusual misfortune pass for a punishment inflicted by an invincible hand. “ And they said one to another, “ We are verily guilty concerning our brother, “ in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he “ besought us, and we would not hear : there- “ fore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben

“ ben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto
 “ you, saying, Do not sin against the child ;
 “ and ye would not hear? therefore behold also
 “ his blood is required (a).” Alphonfus King
 of Naples, was a cruel and tyrannical prince.
 He drove his people to despair with oppressive
 taxes, treacherously assassinated several of his ba-
 rons, and loaded others with chains. During
 prosperity, his conscience gave him little disqui-
 et ; but in adversity, his crimes stared him in the
 face, and made him believe that his distresses pro-
 ceeded from the hand of God, as a just punish-
 ment. He was terrified to distraction, when
 Charles VIII. of France approached with a nu-
 merous army : he deserted his kingdom ; and fled
 to hide himself from the face of God and man.

But admitting a sense of Deity, is it evidence
 to us that a Deity actually exists? The answer
 is, That it is complete evidence. So framed is
 man as to rely on the evidence of his senses (b) ;
 which evidence it is not in his power to reject,
 were he even disposed to be a sceptic. And ex-
 perience confirms our belief ; for our senses,
 when in order, never deceive us.

The foregoing sense of Deity is not the only
 evidence we have of his existence : there is addi-
 tional evidence from other branches of our na-
 ture. Inherent in the nature of man are two
 passions, devotion, of which the Deity is the im-
 mediate and only object ; and dread of punish-
 ment, when one is guilty of any crime. These
 passions would be idle and absurd were there no

(a) Genesis xlii. 21. 22.

(b) See Essays on Morality and Natural Religion,
 part 2. sect. 3.

Deity to be worshipped or to be dreaded: they would be illusory passions, having no object: they would be the single instance of such irregularity; and grossly irregular it would be, to be endued with passions or principles contrived for no end or purpose. Man makes a capital figure; and is the most perfect being that inhabits this earth: how then is it possible to believe, that he should be endued with passions contradictory to the regular and beautiful laws which govern all other things here? It is not credible. The passions mentioned, both of them, direct us to a Deity, and afford us irresistible evidence of his existence.

Thus our Maker leaves no work of his imperfect: he has revealed himself to us, in a way perfectly analagous to our nature: in the mind of every human creature, he has lighted up a lamp, which renders him visible even to the weakest sight. Nor ought it to escape observation, that here, as in every other case, the conduct of Providence to man, is uniform. It leaves him to be directed by reason, where liberty of choice is permitted: but in matters of duty, he is provided with guides less fallible than reason: in performing his duty to man, he is guided by the moral sense; in performing his duty to God, he is guided by the sense of Deity. In these mirrors, he perceives his duty intuitively.

It is no slight support to this doctrine, that if there really be a Deity, it is highly presumable, that he will reveal himself to man, fitted by nature to adore and worship him. To other animals, the knowledge of a Deity is of no importance: to man, it is of high importance. Were we totally ignorant of a Deity, this world would appear to us a mere chaos: under the government of a wise and benevolent Deity, chance is excluded;

excluded; and every event, the result of established laws, is perceived to be the best on the whole. Good men submit to whatever happens, without repining, trusting that every event is ordered by divine Providence: they submit with entire resignation; and such resignation is a sovereign balsam to every misfortune.

The sense of Deity resembles our other senses, which lie dormant till a proper object present itself. When all is silent about us, the sense of hearing is dormant; and if from infancy a man were confined to a dark room, he would be as ignorant of the sense of seeing, as one born blind. Among savages, the objects that rouse the sense of Deity, are uncommon events above the power of man; an earthquake, for example, a hurricane, a total eclipse of the sun, a sudden swell of a river that prevents their escape from an impending enemy. A savage, if he be acquainted with no events but what are familiar, has no perception of superior powers; but thunder rattling in his ears, or the convulsion of an earthquake, rouses in him the sense of Deity, and directs him to some superior being as the cause of these dreadful effects. The savage, it is true, errs in ascribing to the immediate operation of a Deity, things that have a natural cause: his error however is evidence that he has a sense of Deity, no less pregnant, than when he more justly attributes to the immediate operation of Deity, the formation of man, of this earth, of all the world.

The sense of Deity, like the moral sense, makes no capital figure among savages; the perceptions of both senses being in them faint and obscure. But in the progress of nations to maturity, these senses turn more and more vigorous, so as among enlightened nations to acquire a commanding

manding influence ; leaving no doubt about right and wrong, and as little about the existence of a Deity.

The obscurity of the sense of Deity among savages, has encouraged some sceptical philosophers to deny its existence. It has been urged, That God does nothing by halves ; and that if he intended to make himself known to man, the sense of Deity would produce equal conviction with that of seeing or hearing. When we argue thus about the purposes of the Almighty, we tread on slippery ground, where we seldom fail to stumble. What if it be the purpose of the Deity, to afford us but an obscure glimpse of his being and attributes ? We have reason from analogy to conjecture, that this may be the case. From some particulars mentioned above (*a*), it appears at least probable, that entire submission to the moral sense, would be ill-suited to man in his present state ; and would prove more hurtful than beneficial. And to me it appears evident, that to be conscious of the presence of the Great God, as I am of a friend whom I hold by the hand, would be inconsistent with the part that Providence has destined me to act in this life. Reflect only on the restraint one is under, in presence of a superior, suppose the King himself : how much greater our restraint with the same lively impression of God's awful presence ! Humility and veneration would leave no room for other passions : man would be no longer man ; and the system of our present state would be totally subverted. Take another instance : Such a conviction of future rewards and punishments as to overcome every inordinate desire, would reduce us to the condition

(*a*) Book 2. sketch 1.

of a traveller in a paltry inn, having no wish but for day-light to prosecute his journey. For that very reason, it appears agreeable to the plan of Providence, that we should have but an obscure glimpse of futurity. As the same plan of Providence is visible in all, I conclude with assurance, that a certain degree of obscurity, weighs nothing against the sense of Deity, more than against the moral sense, or against a future state of rewards and punishments. Whether all men might not have been made angels, and whether more happiness might not have resulted from a different system, lie far beyond the reach of human knowledge. From what is known of the conduct of Providence, we have reason to presume, that our present state is the result of wisdom and benevolence. So much we know with certainty, that the sense we have of Deity and of moral duty, correspond accurately to the nature of man as an imperfect being; and that these senses, were they absolutely perfect, would unhinge his nature, and convert him into a very different being.

A theory espoused by several writers ancient and modern, must not be overlooked; because it pretends to compose the world without a Deity; which would reduce the sense of Deity to be delusive, if it have any existence. The theory is, That the world, composed of animals, vegetables, and brute matter, is self-existent and eternal; and that all events happen by a necessary chain of causes and effects. In this theory, though wisdom and benevolence are conspicuous in every part, yet the great work of planning and executing the whole, is understood to have been done blindly without intelligence or contrivance. It is scarce necessary to remark, that this theory, assumed at pleasure, is highly improbable, if not absurd; and

and yet that it is left naked to the world without the least cover or support. But what I chiefly insist on is, that the endless number of wise and benevolent effects, displayed every where on the face of this globe, afford to us complete evidence of a wise and benevolent cause ; and as these effects are far above the power of man, we necessarily ascribe them to some superior being, or in other words to the Deity (a). And this is sufficient to remove the present objection against the existence of a sense of Deity. But I am not satisfied with this partial victory. I proceed to observe, that nothing more is required but the proof of a Deity, to overturn the supposition of self-existence in a world composed of many heterogeneous parts, and of a chain of causes and effects framed without intelligence or foresight, though full of wisdom and contrivance in every part. For if a Deity exist, wise and powerful above all other beings, self-existence ought to be his peculiar attribute ; and no person of rationality will have any hesitation in rejecting the self-existence of such a world, when so natural a supposition lies in view, as that the whole is the operation of the truly self-existent Being, whose power and wisdom are fully adequate to that arduous task.

Many gross and absurd conceptions of Deity that have prevailed among rude nations, are urged by some writers as another objection against a sense of Deity. That objection shall not be overlooked ; but it will be answered to better purpose, after these gross and absurd conceptions are

(a) First sketch of this third book, sect. 1.

examined ; which shall be done in the chapter immediately following.

The proof of a Deity from the innate sense here explained, differs materially from what is contained in essays on morality and natural religion (a). The proof there given is founded on a chain of reasoning, altogether independent on the innate sense of Deity. Both equally produce conviction ; but as a sense operates intuitively without reasoning, the sense of Deity is made a branch of human nature, in order to enlighten those who are incapable of a long chain of reasoning ; and to such, who make the bulk of mankind, it is more convincing, than the most perspicuous reasoning to a philosopher.

C H A P. II.

Progress of Opinions with respect to D E I T Y.

THE sense of Deity, like many other delicate senses, is in savages so faint and obscure as easily to be biased from truth. Among them, the belief of many superior beings, is uni-

(a) Part 2. sect. 7.

versal. And two causes join to produce that belief. The first is, that being accustomed to a plurality of visible objects, men, mountains, trees, cattle, and such like, they are naturally led to imagine the same plurality in things not visible; and from that slight bias, slight indeed but natural, is partly derived the system of Polytheism, universal among savages. The other is, that savages know little of the connection between causes and effects, and still less of the order and government of this world: every event that is not familiar, appears to them singular and extraordinary; and if such event exceed human power, it is without hesitation ascribed to a superior being. But as it occurs not to a savage, nor to any person who is not a philosopher, that the many various events exceeding human power and seemingly unconnected, may all proceed from the same cause; they are readily ascribed to different beings. Pliny ascribes Polytheism to another cause, viz. the consciousness men have of their imbecility: "Our powers are confined within narrow bounds: we do not readily conceive powers in the Deity much more extensive; and we supply by number what is wanting in power." Polytheism, thus founded, is the first stage in the progress of theology; for it is embraced by the rudest savages, who have neither capacity nor inclination to pierce deeper into the nature of things.

The next stage is distinguishable from others, by a belief that all superior beings are malevolent. Man by nature weak and helpless, is prone to fear, dreading every new object and every unusual event. Savages, having no protection against storms, tempests, or other external accidents, and having no pleasures but in gratifying hunger, thirst, and animal love, have much to fear, and little

little to hope. In that disconsolate condition, they attribute the bulk of their distresses to invifible beings, who in their opinion must be malevolent. This seems to have been the opinion of the Greeks in the days of Solon ; as appears in a conversation between him and Cræsus King of Lydia, mentioned by Herodotus in the first book of his history. “ Cræsus, said Solon, you ask me “ about human affairs ; and I answer as one “ who thinks that all the gods are envious, and “ disturbers of mankind.” The negroes on the coast of Guinea, dread their deities as tyrants and oppressors : having no conception of a good deity, they attribute the few blessings they receive, to the soil, to the rivers, to the trees, and to the plants. The Lithuanians continued Pagans down to the fourteenth century ; and worshipped in gloomy woods, where their deities were held to reside. Their worship probably was prompted by fear, which is allied to gloominess or darkness. The people of Kamskatka acknowledge to this day many malevolent deities, having little or no notion of a good deity. They believe the air, the water, the mountains, and the woods, to be inhabited by malevolent spirits, whom they fear and worship. The savages of Guiana ascribe to the devil even their most common diseases ; nor do they ever think of another remedy, but to apply to a forcerer to drive him away. Such negroes as believe in the devil, paint his images white.

Conviction of superior beings, who, like men, are of a mixed nature, sometimes doing good, sometimes mischief, constitutes the third stage. This came to be the system of theology in Greece. The introduction of writing among the Greeks, while they were little better than savages, produced a compound of character and
manners,

manners, that has not a parallel in any other nation. They were acute in science, skilful in fine arts, extremely deficient in morals, gross beyond conception in theology, and superstitious to a degree of folly; a strange jumble of exquisite sense and absurd nonsense. They held their gods to resemble men in their external figure, and to be corporeal. In the 21st book of the Iliad, Minerva with a huge stone beats Mars to the ground, whose monstrous body covered seven broad acres. As corporeal beings, they were supposed to require the nourishment of meat, drink, and sleep. Homer mentions more than once the inviting of gods to a feast: and Pausanias reports, that in the temple of Bacchus at Athens, there were figures of clay, representing a feast given by Amphyxion to Bacchus and other deities. The inhabitants of the island Java are not so gross in their conceptions, as to think that the gods eat the offerings presented to them: but it is their opinion, that a deity brings his mouth near the offering, sucks out all its savour, and leaves it tasteless like water *. The Grecian gods, as described by Homer, dress, bathe, and anoint, like mortals. Venus, after being detected by her Husband in the embraces of Mars, retires to Paphos;

Where to the pow'r an hundred altars rise,
And breathing odours scent the balmy skies:
Conceal'd she bathes in consecrated bow'rs,
The Graces unguents shed, ambrosial show'rs,

* All Greek writers, and those in their neighbourhood, form the world out of a chaos. They had no such exalted notion of a deity as to believe, that he could make the world out of nothing.

Unguent that charm the gods ! She last assumes

Her wondrous robes ; and full the goddess blooms.

ODYSSEY, *book 8.*

Juno's dress is most poetically described, *Iliad*, book 14. It was also universally believed, that the gods were fond of women, and had many children by them. The ancient Germans thought more sensibly, that the gods were too high to resemble men in any degree, or to be confined within the walls of a temple. Led by the same impressions of deity, the Greeks seem to have thought, that the gods did not much exceed themselves in knowledge. When Agésilas journeyed with his private retinue, he usually lodged in a temple ; making the gods witnesses, says Plutarch, of his most secret actions. The Greeks thought, that a god, like a man, might know what passed within his own house ; without knowing any thing passing at a greater distance. Agamemnon, in *Eschylus*, putting off his travelling habit, and dressing himself in splendid purple, is afraid of being seen and envied by some jealous god. We learn from *Seneca*, that people strove for the seat next to the image of the deity, that their prayers might be the better heard. But what we have chiefly to remark upon this head, is, that the Grecian gods were, like men, held capable of doing both good and ill. Jupiter, their highest deity, was a ravisher of women, and a notorious adulterer. In the second book of the *Iliad*, he sends a lying dream to deceive Agamemnon. Mars seduces Venus by bribes to commit adultery (*a*). In the

(*a*) *Odyssey*, book 8.

Rhesus of Euripides, Minerva, disguised like Venus, deceives Paris by a gross lie. The ground-work of the tragedy of Xuthus is a lying oracle, declaring Ion, son of Apollo and Creusa, to be the son of Xuthus. Orestes in Euripides, having slain his mother Clytemnestra, excuses himself as having been misled by Apollo to commit the crime. "Ah!" says he, "had I consulted the ghost of my father, he would have dissuaded me from a crime that has proved my ruin, without doing him any good." He concludes with observing, that having acted by Apollo's command, Apollo is the only criminal. In a tragedy of Sophocles, Minerva makes no difficulty to cheat Ajax, by promising to be his friend, while underhand she is serving Ulysses, his bitter enemy. Mercury, in revenge for the murder of his son Myrtilus, entails curses on Pelops the murderer, and on all his race *. In general, the gods, every where in Greek tragedies, are partial, unjust, tyrannical, and revengeful. The Greeks accordingly have no reserve in maltreating their gods. In the tragedy of Prometheus, Jupiter, without the least ceremony, is accused of being an usurper. Eschylus proclaims publicly on the stage, that Jupiter, a jealous, cruel, and implacable tyrant, had overturned every thing in heaven; and that the other gods were reduced to be his slaves. In the Iliad, book 13. Menelaus addresses Jupiter in the following words: "O father Jove! in wisdom, they say, thou excellest both men and gods. Yet all these

* The English translator of that tragedy, observes it to be remarkable in the Grecian creed, that the gods punish the crimes of men upon their innocent posterity.

“ills proceed from thee; for the wicked thou
 “dost aid in war. Thou art a friend to the
 “Trojans, whose souls delight in force, who
 “are never glutted with blood.” The gods were
 often treated with a sort of contemptuous familiarity, and employed in very low offices. Nothing is more common, than to introduce them as actors in Greek tragedies; frequently for trivial purposes: Apollo comes upon the stage most courteously to acquaint the audience with the subject of the play. Why is this not urged by our critics, as classical authority against the rule of Horace, *Nec deus interfit nisi dignus vindice nodus* *. Homer makes very useful servants of his gods. Minerva, in particular, is a faithful attendant upon Ulysses. She acts the herald, and calls the chiefs to council (*a*). She marks the place where a great stone fell that was thrown by Ulysses (*b*). She assists Ulysses to hide his treasure in a cave (*c*), and helps him to wrestle with a beggar (*d*). Ulysses being tossed with cares in bed, she descends from heaven to make him fall asleep (*e*). This last might possibly be squeezed into an allegory, if Minerva were not frequently introduced where there is no place for an alle-

* Nor let a god in person stand display'd,
 Unless the labouring plot deserve his aid.

FRANCIS.

(*a*) *Odyssey*, book 8.

(*b*) Book 8.

(*c*) Book 13.

(*d*) Book 18.

(*e*) *Odyssey*, book 20.

gory.

gory. Jupiter, book 17. of the Iliad, is introduced comforting the steeds of Achilles for the death of Patroclus. It appears from Cicero (a), that when Greek philosophers began to reason about the deity, their notions were wonderfully crude. One of the hardest morsels to digest in Plato's philosophy, was his doctrine, That God is incorporeal ; which by many was thought absurd, for that, without a body, he could not have senses, nor prudence, nor pleasure. The religious creed of the Romans seems to have been little less impure than that of the Greeks. It was a ceremony of theirs, in besieging a town, to evocate the tutelar deity, and to tempt him by a reward to betray his friends and votaries. In that ceremony, the name of the tutelar deity was thought of importance ; and for that reason, the tutelar deity of Rome was a profound secret *. Appian of Alexandria, in his book of

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(a) Lib. i. De natura deorum.

* The form of the *evocatio* follows. " Tuo ductu, inquit, Pythie Apollo, tuoque numine instictus, pergo ad delendam urbem Veios : tibi que hinc decimam partem prædæ voveo. Te simul, Juno Regina, quæ nunc Veios colis, precor, ut nos victores in nostram tuamque mox futuram urbem sequare : ubi te, dignum amplitudine tua, templum accipiat." *Titus Livius, lib. 5. cap. 21.*— [In English thus : " Under thy guidance and divine inspiration, O Pythian Apollo, I march to the destruction of *Veii* ; and to thy shrine I devote a tenth of the plunder. Imperial Juno, guardian of *Veii*, deign to prosper our victorious arms, and a temple shall be erected to thy honour, suitable to the greatness and majesty of thy name."]—But it appears from Macrobius, that they used a form of evocation even when

the Parthian war, reports, that Antony, reduced to extremity by the Parthians, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and besought the gods, that if any of them were jealous of his former happiness, they would pour their vengeance upon his head alone, and suffer his army to escape. The story of Paris and the three goddesses gives no favourable impression, either of the morals or religion of the Romans. Juno and her two sister-deities submit their dispute about beauty to the

when the name of the tutelar deity was unknown to them. “ Si deus, si dea est, cui populus civitasque
 “ Carthaginienfis est in tutela, teque maxime ille qui
 “ urbis hujus populique tutelam recipisti, precor, veneratorque, veniamque a vobis peto, ut vos populum
 “ civitatemque Carthaginienfem deferatis, loca, templa, sacra, urbemque eorum relinquiatis, absque his
 “ abeatis, eique populo, civitatieque metum, formidinem, oblivionem injiciatis, proditque Romam ad
 “ me meosque veneatis, nostraque vobis loca, templa, sacra, urbs, acceptior probatiorque sit, mihi que populoque Romano militibusque meis præpositi sitis, ut sciamus intelligamusque. Si ita feceritis, voveo vobis templa ludosque facturum.” *Saturnal. lib. 3. cap. 9.*—[In English thus: “ That divinity, whether god or goddess, who is the guardian of the
 “ state of Carthage, that divinity I invoke, I pray
 “ and supplicate, that he will desert that perfidious
 “ people. Honour not with thy presence their temples, their ceremonies, nor their city, abandon
 “ them to all their fears, leave them to infamy and
 “ oblivion. Fly hence to Rome, where, in my country, and among my fellow-citizens, thou shalt have
 “ nobler temples, and more acceptable sacrifices;
 “ thou shalt be the tutelar deity of this army, and
 “ of the Roman state. On this condition, I here
 “ vow to erect temples and institute games to thine
 “ honour.”]

shepherd

shepherd Paris, who conscientiously pronounces in favour of Venus. But

—————*manet alta mente repostum.*

Judicium Paridis, spretæque injuria formæ.

Juno, not satisfied with wreaking her malice against the honest shepherd, declares war against his whole nation. Not even Eneas, though a fugitive in foreign lands, escapes her fury. Their great god Jupiter is introduced on the stage by Plautus, to deceive Alcmena, and to lie with her in the shape of her husband. Nay, it was the opinion of the Romans, that this play made much for the honour of Jupiter ; for in times of national troubles and calamities, it was commonly acted to appease his anger ; — a most pregnant instance of the gross conceptions of that warlike people in morality, as well as in religion.

A division of invisible beings into benevolent and malevolent, without any mixture of these qualities, makes the fourth stage. The talents and feelings of men, refine gradually under good government : social amusements begin to make a figure : benevolence is highly regarded ; and some men are found without gall. Having thus acquired a notion of pure benevolence, and finding it exemplified in some persons, it was an easy step in the progress of theological opinions, to bestow the same character upon some superior beings. This led men to distinguish their gods into two kinds, essentially different ; one entirely benevolent, another entirely malevolent ; and the difference between good and ill, which are diametrically opposite, favoured that distinction. Fortunate events out of the common course of nature, were accordingly ascribed to benevolent deities ; and unfortunate events of that kind, to

malevolent. In the time of Pliny the elder, malevolent deities were worshipped at Rome. He mentions a temple dedicated to *Bad Fortune*, another to the disease termed a *Fever*. The Lacedemonians worshipped *Death* and *Fear*, and the people of Cadiz *Poverty* and *Old Age*; in order to deprecate their wrath. Such gods were by the Romans termed *Averrunci*, as putting away evil.

Conviction of one supreme benevolent Deity, and of inferior deities, some benevolent, some malevolent, is the fifth stage. Such conviction, which gains ground in proportion as morality ripens, arises from a remarkable difference between gratitude and fear. Willing to show my gratitude for some kindness proceeding from an unknown hand, several persons occur to my conjectures; but I always fix at last upon one person as the most likely. Fear is of an opposite nature: it expands itself upon every suspicious person, and blackens them all equally. Thus, upon providential good fortune above the power of man, we naturally rest upon one benevolent Deity as the cause; and to him we confine our gratitude and veneration. When, on the other hand, we are struck with an uncommon calamity, every thing that possibly may be the cause, raises terror in us. Hence the propensity in savages to multiply objects of fear; but to confine their gratitude and veneration to a single object. Gratitude and veneration, at the same time, are of such a nature, as to raise a high opinion of the person who is their object; and when a single invisible being is understood to pour out blessings with a liberal hand, good men, inflamed with gratitude, put no bounds to the power and benevolence of that being. And thus one supreme benevolent Deity comes to be recognised among the more enlightened savages. With respect to
malevo-

malevolent deities, as they are supposed to be numerous, and as there is no natural impulse for elevating one above the another, they are all of them held to be of an inferior rank, subordinate to the supreme Deity.

Unity in the supreme being hath, among philosophers, a more solid foundation, viz. unity of design and of order in the creation and government of this world *. At the same time, the passion of gratitude, which leads even savages to the attribute of unity in the supreme being, prepares the mind for relishing the proof of that unity, founded on the unity of his works.

The belief of one supreme benevolent Deity, and of subordinate deities benevolent and malevolent, is and has been more universal than any other religious creed. I confine myself to a few instances; for a complete enumeration would be endless. The different savage tribes in Dutch Guiana, agree pretty much in their articles of faith. They hold the existence of one supreme Deity, whose chief attribute is benevolence; and to him they ascribe every good that happens. But as it is against his nature to do ill, they believe in subordinate malevolent beings, like our devil, who occasion thunder, hurricanes, earthquakes, and who are the authors of death, dis-

* All things in the universe are evidently of a piece. Every thing is adjusted to every thing; one design prevails through the whole: and this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author; because the conception of different authors without distinction of attributes or operations, serves only to perplex the imagination, without bestowing any satisfaction on the understanding. *Natural history of Religion, by David Hume, Esquire.*

eases, and of every misfortune. To these devils termed in their language *Towahoots*, they direct every supplication, in order to avert their malevolence ; while the supreme Deity is entirely neglected : so much more powerful among savages, is fear than gratitude. The North-American savages have all of them a notion of a supreme Deity, creator and governor of the world, and of inferior deities, some good, some ill. These are supposed to have bodies, and to live much as men do, but without being subjected to any distress. The same creed prevails among the negroes of Benin and Congo, among the people of New Zeland, among the inhabitants of Java, of Madagascar, of the Molucca islands, and of the Caribbee islands. The Chinguliese, a tribe in the island of Ceylon, acknowledge one God creator of the universe, with subordinate deities who act as his deputies : agriculture is the peculiar province of one, navigation of another. The creed of the Tonquinese is nearly the same. The inhabitants of Otaheite, termed *King George's island*, believe in one supreme Deity ; and in inferior deities without end, who preside over particular parts of the creation. They pay no adoration to the supreme Deity, thinking him too far elevated above his creatures to concern himself with what they do. They believe the stars to be children of the sun and moon, and an eclipse to be the time of copulation. According to Arnobius, certain Roman deities presided over the various operations of men. Venus presided over carnal copulation ; Puta assisted at pruning trees ; and Peta in requesting benefits ; Nemestrinus was god of the woods, Nodutus ripened corn, and Terensis helped to thresh it ; Vibilia assisted travellers ; orphans were under the care of Orbona, and dying persons, of Nænia ; Offi-
lago

lago hardened the bones of infants ; and Mellonia protected bees, and bestowed sweetness on their honey. The inhabitants of the island of Formosa recognise two deities in company ; the one a male, god of the men, the other a female goddess of the women. The bulk of their inferior deities are the souls of upright men, who are constantly doing good, and the souls of wicked men, who are constantly doing ill. The inland negroes acknowledge one supreme being, creator of all things ; attributing to him infinite power, infinite knowledge, and ubiquity. They believe that the dead are converted into spirits, termed by them *Iananini*, or protectors, being appointed to guard their parents and relations. The ancient Goths, and several other northern nations, acknowledged one supreme being ; and at the same time worshipped three subordinate deities ; Thor, reputed the same with Jupiter ; Oden, or Woden, the same with Mars ; and Friga, the same with Venus*. Socrates, taking the cup of poison from the executioner, held it up toward heaven, and pouring out some of it as an oblation to the supreme Deity, pronounced the following prayer : “ I implore the immortal God that my translation hence may be happy.” Then turning to Crito, said, “ O Crito ! I owe a cock to Esculapius, pay it.” From this incident we find that Socrates, soaring above his countrymen, had attained to the belief of a supreme benevolent Deity. But in that dark age of religion, such purity is not to be expected from Socrates him-

* *Rēgnatur omnium Dēus, cætera subiecta atque parentia ; Tacitus de moribus Germanorum, cap. 39.* [*In English thus :* “ One God the ruler of all ; the rest inferior and subordinate.”]

self, as to have rejected subordinate deities, even of the mercenary kind.

Different offices being assigned to the gods, as above mentioned, proper names followed of course. And when a god was ascertained by a name, the busy mind would naturally proceed to trace his genealogy.

As unity in the Deity was not an established doctrine in the countries where the Christian religion was first promulgated, Christianity could not fail to prevail over Paganism; for improvements in the mental faculties lead by sure steps, though slow, to one God.

The sixth stage is, the belief of one supreme benevolent Deity, as in that immediately foregoing, with many inferior benevolent deities, and one only who is malevolent. As men improve in natural knowledge, and become skilful in tracing causes from effects, they find much less malice and ill-design than was imagined: humanity at last prevails, which, in connection with improved knowledge, banishes the suspicion of ill-design, in every case where an event can possibly be explained without it. In a word, a settled opinion of good prevailing in the world, produced conviction among some nations, less ignorant than their neighbours, and less brutal, that there is but one malevolent subordinate deity, and good subordinate deities without number. The ancient Persians acknowledged two principles; one all good and all powerful, named *Hormuz*, and by the Greeks corruptly *Oromazes*; the other evil, named *Ahariman*, and by the Greeks *Arimanes*. Some authors assert, that the Persians held these two principles to be coeternal: others, that *Oromazes* first subsisted alone, that he created both light and darkness, and that he created *Arimanes* out of darkness. That the latter was the

the opinion of the ancient Persians, appears from their Bible, termed the *Sadder*; which teaches, That there is one God supreme over all, many good angels, and but one evil spirit. Plutarch acquaints us, that Hormuz and Ahariman, for ever at variance, formed, each of them, creatures of their own stamp; that the former created good genii, such as goodness, truth, wisdom, justice; and that the latter created evil genii, such as infidelity, falsehood, oppression, theft. This system of theology, commonly termed the *Manichean system*, is said to be also the religious creed of Pegu, with the following addition, that the evil principle only is to be worshiped; which is abundantly probable, as fear is a predominant passion in barbarians. The people of Florida believe a supreme benevolent Deity, and a subordinate deity that is malevolent: neglecting the former, who, they say, does no harm, they bend their whole attention to soften the latter, who, they say, torments them day and night. The inhabitants of Darian acknowledge but one evil spirit, of whom they are desperately afraid. The Hottentots, mentioned by some writers as altogether destitute of religion, are, on the contrary, farther advanced toward its purity, than some of their neighbours. Their creed is, That there is a supreme being, who is goodness itself; of whom they have no occasion to stand in awe, as he is incapable by his nature to hurt them; that there is also a malevolent spirit, subordinate to the former, who must be served and worshipped in order to avert his malice. The epicurean doctrine with respect to the gods in general, That being happy in themselves, they extend not their providential care to men, differs not widely from what the Hottentot believes with respect to the supreme being.

Having

Having traced the sense of deity, from its dawn in the grossest savages, to its approaching maturity among enlightened nations, we proceed to the last stage of the progress, which makes the true system of theology; and that is, conviction of a supreme being, boundless in every perfection, without any subordinate deities, benevolent or malevolent. Savages learn early to trace the chain of causes and effects, with respect to ordinary events: they know that fasting produces hunger, that labour occasions weariness, that fire burns, that the sun and rain contribute to vegetation. But when they go beyond such familiar events, they lose sight of cause and effect: the changes of weather, of winds, of heat and cold, impress them with a notion of chance: earthquakes, hurricanes, storms of thunder and lightning, which fill them with terror, are ascribed to malignant beings of greater power than man. In the progress of knowledge, light begins to break in upon them: they discover, that such phenomena, however tremendous, come under the general law of cause and effect, and that there is no ground for ascribing them to malignant spirits. At the same time, our more refined senses ripen by degrees: social affections come to prevail; and morality makes a deep impression. In maturity of sense and understanding, benevolence appears more and more; and beautiful final causes are discovered in many of nature's productions, that formerly were thought useless, or perhaps destructive: and the time may come, we have solid ground to hope that it will come, when doubts and difficulties about the government of Providence, will all of them be cleared up; and every event be found conducive to the general good. Such views of Providence banish malevolent deities; and we settle at last

last in a most comfortable opinion; either that there are no such beings; or that, if they exist and are permitted to perpetrate any mischief, it is in order to produce greater good. Thus, through a long maze of errors, man arrives at true religion, acknowledging but one Being, supreme in power, intelligence, and benevolence, who created all other beings, to whom all other beings are subjected, and who directs every event to answer the best purposes. This system is true theology *.

Having gone through the different stages of religious belief, in its gradual progress toward truth and purity, I proceed to a very important article, viz. The history of tutelar deities. The belief of tutelar deities preceded indeed several of the stages mentioned, witness the tutelar deities of Greece and Rome; but as it is not connected with any one of them exclusive of the rest, the clearness of method required it to be postponed to all of them. This belief, founded on selfishness, made a rapid progress after property in the goods of fortune was established. The Greeks, the Romans, and indeed most nations that were not mere savages, appropriated to themselves tutelar deities, who were understood to befriend them upon all occasions; and, in particular, to fight for them against their enemies. The Iliad of Homer is full of miraculous battles between the Greeks and Trojans, the tutelar deities mixing with the contending parties, and partaking of every disaster, death only excepted, which immortals could

* Pliny seems to relish the doctrine of unity in the Deity; but is at a loss about forming any just conception of him, sometimes considering the world to be our only deity, sometimes the sun.

not suffer. The *lares*, *penates*, or household-gods, of Indostan, of Greece, and of Rome, bear witness, that every family, perhaps every person, was thought to be under the protection of a tutelar deity. Alexander ab Alexandro gives a list of tutelar deities. Apollo and Minerva were the tutelar deities of Athens; Bacchus and Hercules of the Bœotian Thebes; Juno of Carthage, Samos, Sparta, Argos, and Mycené; Venus of Cyprus; Apollo of Rhodes, and of Delphos; Vulcan of Lemnos; Bacchus of Naxos; Neptune of Tenedos, &c. The poets testify, that even individuals had tutelar deities:

Mulciber in Trojam, pro Troja stabat Apollo:
 Æqua Venus Teucris, Pallas iniqua fuit.
 Oderat Æneam, propior Saturnia Turno;
 Ille tamen Veneris numine tutus erat.
 Sæpe ferox cautum petiit Neptunus Ulysses;
 Eripuit patruo sæpe Minerva suo * (a).

Though the North-American savages recognise a supreme Being, wise and benevolent, and also subordinate benevolent beings who are intrusted with the government of the world; yet as the great distance of these subordinate beings, and the full occupation they have in general government, are supposed to make them overlook individuals, eve-

- * “ The rage of Vulcan, and the martial maid,
 “ Pursued old Troy; but Phœbus’ love repay’d.
 “ Æneas safe, defy’d great Juno’s hate,
 “ For Venus guards her favour’d offspring’s fate:
 “ In vain Ulysses Neptune’s wrath assails,
 “ O’er winds and waves Minerva’s power prevails.”

(a) Ovid, Trist. lib. 1. eleg. 2.

ry man has a tutelar deity of his own termed *Manitou*, who is constantly invoked during war to give him victory over his enemies. The Natches, bordering on the Mississippi, offer up the skulls of their enemies to their god, and deposite them in his temple. They consider that being as their tutelar deity who assists them against their enemies, and to whom therefore the skull of an enemy must be an acceptable offering. Though they worship the sun, who impartially shines on all mankind; yet such is their partiality, that they consider themselves as his chosen people, and that their enemies are his enemies.

A belief so absurd shows woful imbecility in human nature. Is it not obvious, that the great God of heaven and earth, governs the world by inflexible laws, from whence he never can swerve in any case, because they are the best possible in every case? To suppose any family or nation to be an object of his peculiar love, is no less impious, than to suppose any family or nation to be an object of his peculiar hatred: they equally arraign Providence of partiality. Even the Goths had more just notions of the Deity. Totila, recommending to his people justice and humanity, says, “*Quare sic habete, ea quæ amari ab hominibus solent ita vobis salva fore, si justitiæ reverentiam servaveritis. Si transitis in mores alios, etiam Deum ad hostes transiturum. Neque enim ille, aut omnibus omnino hominibus, aut uni alicui genti, addicit se socium*.*”

That

* “Be assured of this, that while ye preserve your reverence for justice, ye will enjoy all the blessings which are estimable among mankind. If ye refuse to obey

That God was once the tutelar deity of the Jews, is true ; but not in the vulgar acceptation of that term, importing a deity chosen by a people to be their patron and protector. The orthodox faith is, “ That God chose the Jews as his
 “ peculiar people, not from any partiality to
 “ them, but that there might be one nation to
 “ keep alive the knowledge of one supreme
 “ Deity ; which should be prosperous while they
 “ adhered to him, and unprosperous when they
 “ declined to idolatry ; not only in order to make
 “ them persevere in the true faith, but also in
 “ order to exemplify to all nations the conduct
 “ of his Providence.” It is certain, however, that the perverse Jews claimed God Almighty as their tutelar deity, in the vulgar acceptation of the term. And this error throws light upon an incident related in the Acts of the Apostles. There was a prophecy firmly believed by the Jews, that the Messiah would come among them in person to restore their kingdom. The Christians gave a different sense to the prophecy, viz. that the kingdom promised was not of this world. And they said, that Christ was sent to pave the way to their heavenly kingdom, by obtaining forgiveness of their sins. At the same time, as the Jews held all other nations in abhorrence, it was natural for them to conclude, that the Messiah would be sent to them only, God’s chosen people ; for which reason, even the apostles were at first doubtful

“ obey her dictates, and your morals become corrupt-
 “ ed, God himself will abandon you, and take the
 “ part of your enemies. For although the benevo-
 “ lence of that power is not partially confined to
 “ tribe or people, yet in the eye of his justice all
 “ men are not equally the objects of his approba-
 “ tion.”

about

about preaching the gospel to any but to the Jews (*a*). But the apostles reflecting, that it was one great purpose of the mission, to banish from the Jews their groveling and impure notion of a tutelar deity, and to proclaim a state of future happiness to all who believe in Christ, they proceeded to preach the gospel to all men: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (*b*)."

The foregoing reasoning, however, did not satisfy the Jews: they could not digest the opinion, that God sent his Messiah to save all nations; and that he was the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. They stormed against Paul in particular for inculcating that doctrine (*c*).

Considering that religion in its purity was established by the gospel, is it not amazing, that even Christians fell back to the worship of tutelar deities? They did not indeed adopt the absurd opinion, that the supreme Being was their tutelar deity: but they held, that there are divine persons subordinate to the Almighty, who take under their care nations, families, and even individuals; an opinion that differs not essentially from that of tutelar deities among the Heathens. That opinion, which flatters self-love, took root in the fifth century, when the deification of saints was intro-

(*a*) See the 10th and 11th chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

(*b*) Acts of the Apostles, x. 34.

(*c*) Acts of the Apostles, chap. 13.

duced, similar to the deification of heroes among the ancients. With regard to matters spiritual, as well as temporal, people are fond of friends to be their intercessors; and with regard to the Deity, deified saints were thought the properest intercessors. Temples were built and dedicated to them, and solemn rites of worship instituted to render them propitious. It was imagined, that the souls of deified saints are at liberty to roam where they list, and that they love the places where their bodies are interred; which accordingly made the sepulchres of the saints a common rendezvous of supplicants. What paved the way to notions so absurd, was the gross ignorance that clouded the Christian world after the northern barbarians became masters of Europe. In the seventh century, the bishops were so illiterate as to be indebted to others for the shallow sermons they preached; and the very few of that order who had any learning, satisfied themselves with composing insipid homilies, collected from the writings of Augustin and Gregory. In the ninth century, matters grew worse and worse; for these saints, held at first to be mediators for Christians in general, were now converted into tutelar deities in the strictest sense. An opinion prevailed, that such saints as are occupied about the souls of Christians in general, have little time for individuals; which led every church, and every private Christian, to elect for themselves a particular saint, as their peculiar patron or tutelar deity. That practice made it necessary to deify saints without end, in order to furnish a tutelar deity to every individual. The dubbing of saints, became a new source of abuses and frauds in the Christian world: lying wonders were invented, and fabulous histories composed, to celebrate exploits that never were performed, and to glorify persons that never had

had a being. And thus religion among Christians, sunk down into as low a state as it had been among Pagans.

There still remains upon hand a capital branch of our history ; and that is idolatry, which properly signifies the worshipping visible objects as deities. But as idolatry evidently sprung from religious worship, corrupted by the ignorant and brutish, it will make its appearance with more advantage in the next section, of which religious worship is the subject.

We have thus traced with wary steps, the gradual progress of theology through many stages, corresponding to the gradual openings and improvements of the human mind. But though that progress in almost all countries appears uniform with respect to the order of succession, it is far otherwise with respect to the quickness of succession: nations, like individuals, make a progress from infancy to maturity ; but they advance not with an equal pace, some making a rapid course toward perfection in knowledge and in religion, while others remain ignorant barbarians. The religion of Hindostan, if we credit history or tradition, had advanced to a considerable degree of purity and refinement, at a very early period. The Hindostan Bible, termed *Chatahbhade* or *Shastah*, gives an account of the creation, lapse of the angels, and creation of man ; instructs us in the unity of the Deity, but denies his prescience as being inconsistent with free-will in man ; all of them profound doctrines of an illuminated people ; to establish which a long course of time must have been requisite, after wandering through errors without number. Compared with the Hindows in theology, even the Greeks were mere savages. The Grecian gods were held to be little better than men, and their history, as
above

above mentioned, corresponds to the notion entertained of them.

In explaining the opinions of men with respect to Deity, I have confined my view to such opinions as are suggested by principles or biases that make a part of common nature ; omitting many whimsical notions, no better than dreams of a roving imagination. The plan delineated shows wonderful uniformity in the progress of religion through all nations. That the whimsical notions mentioned are far otherwise, is not wonderful. Take the following specimen. The Kamskatkans are not so stupidly ignorant, as to be altogether void of curiosity. They sometimes think of natural appearances.—Rain, say they, is some deity pissing upon them ; and they imagine the rainbow to be a party-coloured garment, put on by him in preparing for that operation. They believe wind to be produced by a god shaking his long hair about his head with violence. Such tales will scarce amuse children in the nursery. The inhabitants of the island Celebes formerly acknowledged no gods but the sun and the moon, which were held to be eternal. Ambition for superiority made them fall out. The moon being wounded in flying from the sun, was delivered of the earth.

Hitherto of the gradual openings of the human mind with respect to Deity. I close this section with an account of some unsound notions concerning the conduct of Providence, and concerning some speculative matters. I begin with the former.

In days of ignorance, the conduct of Providence is very little understood. Far from having any notion, than the government of this world is carried on by general laws, which are inflexible because they are the best possible, every important

tant event is attributed to an immediate interposition of the Deity. As the Grecian gods were thought to have bodies like men, and like men to require nourishment ; they were imagined to act like men, forming short-sighted plans of operation, and varying them from time to time according to exigencies. Even the wise Athenians, had an utter aversion for philosophers who attempted to account for effects by general laws: such doctrine they thought tended to fetter the gods, and to prevent them from governing events at their pleasure. An eclipse being held to be a prognostic given by the gods of some grievous calamity, Anaxagoras was accused of Atheism for attempting to explain the eclipse of the moon by natural causes: he was thrown into prison, and with difficulty was relieved by the influence of Pericles. Protagoras was banished Athens for maintaining the same doctrine. Procopius overflows with signal interpositions of Providence ; and Agathias, beginning at the battle of Marathon, sagely maintains, that from that time downward, there was not a battle lost, but by an immediate judgment of God, for the sins of the commander, or of his army, or of one person or other. Our Saviour's doctrine with respect to those who suffered by the fall of the tower of Siloam, ought to have opened their eyes ; but superstitious eyes are never opened by instruction. At the same time, it is deplorable that such belief has no good influence on manners: on the contrary, never doth wickedness so much abound as in dark times. A curious fact is related by Procopius (a) with respect to that sort of superstition. When Rome was besieged by the Goths, and in danger of de-

(a) *Historia Gothica*, lib. i.

struction, a part of the town-wall, declining from the perpendicular, was in a tottering condition. Belisarius, proposing to fortify it, was opposed by the citizens, affirming, that it was guarded by St. Peter. Procopius observes, that the event answered expectation; for that the Goths, during a tedious siege, never once attempted that weak part. He adds, that the wall remained in the same ruinous state at the time of his writing. Here is a curious conceit:—Peter created a tutelar deity, able and willing, for the sake of his votaries, to counteract the laws by which God governs the material world. And for what mighty benefit to them? Only to save them five or fifty pounds in rebuilding the crazy part of the wall.

It is no less inconsistent with the regular course of Providence, to believe, as many formerly did, that in all doubtful cases the Almighty, when appealed to, never fails to interpose in favour of the right side. The inhabitants of Constantinople, ann. 1284, being split into parties about two contending patriarchs, the Emperor ordered a fire to be made in the church of St Sophia, and a memorial from each party to be thrown into it; never doubting, but that God would save from the flames the memorial of the party whose cause he espoused. But, to the utter astonishment of all beholders, the flames paid not the least regard to either of the memorials. The same absurd opinion gave birth to the trial by fire, by water, and by singular battle. And it is not a little remarkable, that such trials were common among many nations that had no intercourse one with another: even the enlightened people of Indostan try crimes by dipping the hand of a suspected person in boiling oil.—Such uniformity is there with respect even to superstitious opinions.

opinions. Pope Gregory VII. insisting, that the Kings of Castile and Aragon should lay aside their Gothic liturgy for the Romish, the matter was put to trial by singular battle; and two champions were chosen, to declare by victory the opinion of God Almighty. The Emperor Otho I. observing the doctors to differ about a point of law, viz. the right of representation in land-estates, appointed a duel; and the right of representation gained the victory. If any thing can render such a doctrine palatable, it is the believing in a tutelar deity, who with less absurdity may interpose in behalf of a favourite opinion, or of a favourite people. Appian gravely reports, that when the city of Rhodes was besieged by Mithridates, a statue of the goddess Isis was seen to dart flames of fire upon a bulky engine, raised by the besiegers to overtop the wall.

Historians mention an incident that happened in the island Celebes, founded on a belief of the same kind with that above mentioned. About two centuries ago, some Christian and some Mahometan missionaries made their way to that island. The chief king, struck with the fear of hell taught by both, assembled a general council; and extending his hands toward heaven, addressed the following prayer to the supreme being.

“ Great God, from thee I demand nothing but
 “ justice, and to me thou owest it. Men of dif-
 “ ferent religions have come to this island,
 “ threatening eternal punishment to me and my
 “ people if we disobey thy laws. What are thy
 “ laws? Speak, O my God, who art the au-
 “ thor of nature: thou knowest the bottom of
 “ our hearts, and that we can never intentionally
 “ disobey thee. But if it be unworthy of thy
 “ essence to employ the language of men, I call
 “ upon my whole people, the sun which gives
 “ me

“ me light, the earth which bears me, the
 “ sea which surrounds my empire, and upon
 “ thee thyself, to bear witness for me, that in
 “ the sincerity of my heart I wish to know thy
 “ will ; and this day I declare, that I will ac-
 “ knowledge as the depositaries of thy oracles,
 “ the first ministers of either religion that shall
 “ land on this island.”

It is equally erroneous to believe, that certain ceremonies will protect one from mischief. In the dark ages of Christianity, the signing with the figure of a cross, was held not only to be an antidote against the snares of malignant spirits, but to inspire resolution for supporting trials and calamities : for which reason no Christian in those days undertook any thing of moment, till he had used that ceremony. It was firmly believed in France, that a gold or silver coin of St Louis, hung from the neck, was a protection against all diseases : and we find accordingly a hole in every remaining coin of that king, for fixing it to a ribbon. In the minority of Charles VIII. of France the three estates, ann. 1484, supplicated his Majesty, that he would no longer defer the being anointed with the holy oil, as the favour of Heaven was visibly connected with that ceremony. They affirmed, that his grandfather Charles VII. never prospered till he was anointed ; and that Heaven afterward fought on his side, till the English were expelled out of his kingdom. The high altar of St Margaret's church in the island of Icolmkill, was covered with a plate of blue marble finely veined ; which has suffered from a superstitious conceit, that the smallest bit of it will preserve a ship from sinking. It has accordingly been carried off piece-meal ; and at present there is scarce enough left to make an experiment. In the Sadder, certain prayers are enjoined

ed when one sneezes or pisses, in order to chase away the devil. Cart-wheels in Lisbon are composed of two boards clumsily cut in a circular form, and nailed together. Though the noise is intolerable, yet the axles are never greased, because the noise, say they, frightens the devil from hurting their oxen.

Nay, so far has superstition been carried, as to found a belief, that the devil by magic can control the course of Providence. A Greek bishop having dreamed, that a certain miracle had failed by magic, the supposed magician and his son were condemned to die, without the least evidence but the dream. Montesquieu collects a number of circumstances, each of which, though all extremely improbable, ought to have been clearly made out, in order to prove the crime (a). The Emperor Theodore Lascaris, imagining magic to be the cause of his distemper, put the persons suspected to the trial of holding a red-hot iron without being burnt. In the capitularies of Charlemagne, in the canons of several councils, and in the ancient laws of Norway punishments are enacted against those who are supposed able to raise tempests, *Tempestarii*. During the time of Catharine de Medicis, in the court of France there was a jumble of politics, gallantry, luxury, debauchery, superstition, and Atheism. It was common to take the resemblance of enemies in wax, in order to torment them by roasting the figure at a slow fire, and pricking it with needles. If an enemy happened in one instance of a thousand to pine and die, the charm was established for ever. Sorcery and witchcraft were so universally believed in En-

(a) L'Esprit des loix, lib. 12. ch. 5.

gland, that in a preamble to a statute of Henry VIII. ann. 1511, it is set forth, “ That smiths, “ weavers, and women, boldly take upon them “ great cures, in which they partly use sorcery, “ and witchcraft.” The first printers, who were Germans, having carried their books to Paris for sale, were condemned by the parliament to be burnt alive as sorcerers; and did not escape punishment but by a precipitant flight. It had indeed much the appearance of sorcery, that a man could write so many copies of a book, without the slightest variation.

There are many examples of extraordinary virtues being attributed to certain things, in themselves of no significancy. The Hungarians were possessed of a golden crown, sent from heaven with the peculiar virtue, as they believed, of bestowing upon the person who wore it, an undoubted title to be their king.

But the most extraordinary effort of absurd superstition, is a persuasion, that one may control the course of Providence, by making a downright bargain with God Almighty to receive from him *quid pro quo*. A herd of Tartars in Siberia, named by the Russians *Baravinskoi*, have in every hut a wooden idol, termed in their language *Sheitan*, about eighteen inches high, to which they address their prayers for plenty of game in hunting, promising to give it, if successful, a new coat or a new bonnet: a sort of bargain abundantly brutish; and yet more excusable in mere savages, than what is made with the Virgin Mary by enlightened Roman Catholics; who, upon condition of her relieving them from distress, promise her a waxen taper to burn on her altar. Philip II. of Spain made a vow, that, upon condition of gaining the battle of St Quintin, he would build the Monastery of Escorial; as if an establishment

establishment for some idle monks, could be a motive with the great God to vary the course of his Providence *. Beside the absurdity of thinking that such vows can have the effect to alter the established laws of Providence, they betray a most contemptible notion of the Deity, as if his favours, like a horse, or a cow, could be purchased with money.

But however loose and disjointed, events appear to the ignorant, when viewed as past, or as passing, future events take on a very different appearance. The doctrine of prognostics is evidently founded upon a supposition, that future events are unalterably fixed ; for otherwise that doctrine would appear absurd, even to the most ignorant. There is no bias in human nature that has greater influence, than curiosity about futurity ; which in dark ages governs without control : men with no less folly than industry have ransacked the earth, the sea, the air, and even the stars, for prognostics of future events. The Greeks had their oracles, the Romans their augurs, and all the world their omens. The Grecian oracles and Roman auguries are evidently built upon their belief of tutelar deities ; and the numberless omens that influence weak people in every country, seem to rest upon the

* Having gained the battle of St Quintin on the festival of St Laurence, Philip reckoned himself obliged to the saint for this victory, no less than to God Almighty ; and accordingly, he not only built the monastery he had vowed, but also a church for the saint and a palace for himself, all under one roof : and what is not a little ludicrous, the edifice is built in resemblance of a gridiron, which, according to the legend, was the instrument of Laurence's martyrdom.

same foundation *. Ancient histories are stuffed with omens, prodigies, and prognostics : Livy overflows with fooleries of that kind. Endless are the adverse omens reported by Appian of Alexandria, that are said to have given warning of the defeat of Crassus by the Parthians ; and no fewer in number are those which happened at the death of the Emperor Hadrian, if we believe Spartianus. Lampridius, with great gravity, recites the omens which prognosticated that Alexander Severus would be Emperor : he was born the same day on which Alexander the Great died : he was brought forth in a temple dedicated to Alexander the Great : he was named *Alexander* ; and an old woman gave to his mother, a pigeon's egg of a purple colour produced on his birth-day. A comet is an infallible prognostic of the death of a king. But of what king ? Why, of the king who dies next. Suetonius, with the solemnity of a pulpit-instructor, informs us, that the death of the Emperor Claudius was predicted by a comet ; and of Tiberius, by the fall of a tower during an earthquake. Such opinions, which indeed have some foundation in our nature, take fast hold of the mind, when invigorated by education and example. Even philosophy is not sufficient to eradicate them but by slow degrees : witness Tacitus, the most pro-

* It is no wonder that the Romans were superstitiously addicted to omens and auguries : like mere savages, they put no value upon any science but that of war ; and, for that reason, they banished all philosophers, as useless members of society. Thus, that nation, so fierce and so great in war, surrendered themselves blindly to superstition, and became slaves to imaginary evils. Even their gravest historians were deeply tainted with that disease.

found of all historians, who cannot forbear to usher in the death of the Emperor Otho, with a foolish account of a strange unknown bird appearing at that time. He indeed, with decent reserve, mentions it only as a fact reported by others; but from the warm style of his narrative it is evident, that the story had made an impression upon him. The ancient Germans drew many of their omens from horses: "Proprium gentis, equorum presagia ac monitus experiri. Publice aluntur iisdem nemoribus ac lucis, candidae, et nullo mortali opere contacti, quos pressos sacro curru, sacerdos, ac rex, vel princeps civitatis, comitantur, hinnitusque ac fremitus observant. Nec ulli auspicio major fides, non solum apud plebem, sed apud proceres, apud sacerdotes * (a)." There is scarce a thing seen or imagined, but what the inhabitants of Madagascar consider as a prognostic of some future event. The Hindows rely on the augury of birds, precisely as the old Romans did. Tho' there is not the slightest probability, that an impending misfortune was ever prevented by such prognostics; yet the desire of knowing

* "It is peculiar to that people, to deduce omens and presages from horses. These animals are maintained at the public expence, in groves and forests, and are not allowed to be polluted with any work for the use of man; but being yoked in the sacred chariot, the priest, and the king, or chief of the state, attend them, and carefully observe their neighings. The greatest faith is given to this method of augury, both among the vulgar and the nobles."

(a) Tacitus, De moribus Germanorum, cap. 10.

future events is so deeply rooted in our nature, that omens will always prevail among the vulgar, in spite of the clearest light of philosophy *.

With respect to prophecies in particular, one apology may be made for them, that no other prognostic of futurity is less apt to do mischief. What Procopius (a) observes of the Sybilline oracles, is equally applicable to prophecies in general, "That it is above the sagacity of man
" to explain any of them before the event happens." After perusing many, he gives the following reason, "Matters are there handled," says he, "not in any order, nor in a continued
" discourse : but after mentioning the distresses
" of Africa, for example, they give a slight
" touch at the Persians, the Romans, the Assyrians; then returning to the Romans, they
" fall slap-dash upon the calamities of Britain." A curious example of this observation, is a book of prophecies composed in Scotland by Thomas Learmont, commonly called *Thomas the Rhymmer*, because the book is in rhyme. Plutarch, in the life of Cicero, reports, that a spectre appeared to Cicero's nurse, and foretold, that the child would become a great support to the Roman

* Is it not mortifying to human pride, that a great philosopher [*Bacon*] should think like the vulgar upon this subject? Mentioning great rejoicings in London upon the daughter of Henry VII. of England being married to James IV. of Scotland, he adds, "not
" from any affection to the Scots, but from a secret
" instinct and inspiration of the advantages that would
" accrue from the match."

(a) *Gothica Historia*, lib. 1.

state ;

state ; and most innocently he makes the following reflection : “ This might have passed for an “ idle tale, had not Cicero demonstrated the “ truth of the prediction ;” which in effect is saying, that if a prediction happen to prove true, it is a real prophecy ; if otherwise, that it is an idle tale. There have been prophecies not altogether so well guarded as the Sybilline oracles. Napier, inventor of the logarithms, found the day of judgment predicted in the Revelation ; and named the very day ; which unfortunately he survived. He made another prediction, but prudently named a day so distant, as to be in no hazard of blushing a second time. Michel Stifels, a German clergyman, spent most of his life in attempting to discover the day of judgment ; and at last announced to his parishioners, that it would happen within a year. The parishioners, resolving to make the best of a bad bargain, spent their time merrily, taking no care to lay up provisions for another year ; and so nice was their calculation, as at the end of the year to have not a morsel remaining, either of food or of industry. The famous Jurieu has shewn great ingenuity in explaining prophecies ; of which take the following instance. In his book, intituled, *Accomplishment of the prophecies*, he demonstrates, that the beast in the Apocalypse, which held the *poculum aureum plenum abominationum* *, is the Pope ; and his reason is, that the initial letters of these four Latin words compose the word *papa* ; a very singular prophecy indeed ; that is a prophecy in Latin, but in no other language. The candid reader will advert, that such prophecies as relate

* “ The golden cup full of abominations.”

to our Saviour, and tend to ascertain the truth of his mission, fall not under the foregoing reasoning; for they do not anticipate futurity, by producing foreknowledge of future events. They were not understood till our Saviour appeared among men; and then they were clearly understood as relative to him.

There is no end of superstition in its various modes. It was believed universally in dark times, that by certain forms and invocations, the spirits of the dead could be called upon to reveal future events. A lottery in Florence, gainful to the government, and ruinous to the people, gives great scope to superstition. The purchaser of tickets, in order to be successful, must fast six and thirty hours, must repeat a certain number of Ave Marias and Pater Nosters, must not speak to a living creature, must not go to bed, must continue in prayer to the Virgin, and to saints, till some propitious saint appear and declare the numbers that are to be successful. The ticket-holder, fatigued with fasting, praying, and expectation, falls asleep. Occupied with the thoughts he had when awake, he dreams that a saint appears, and mentions the numbers that are to be successful. If he be disappointed, he is vexed at his want of memory; but trusts in the saint as an infallible oracle. Again he buys tickets, again falls asleep, again sees a vision, and again is disappointed.

Lucky and unlucky days, which were so much relied on as even to be marked in the Greek and Roman calendars, make an appendix to prophecies. The Tartars never undertake any thing of moment on a Wednesday, being held by them unlucky. The Nogayan Tartars hold every thirteenth year to be unlucky: they will not even wear a sword that year, believing that it would be

be their death ; and they maintain, that none of their warriors ever returned who went upon an expedition in one of these years. They pass that time in fasting and prayer, and during it never marry. The inhabitants of Madagascar have days fortunate and unfortunate with respect to the birth of children : they destroy without mercy every child that is born on an unfortunate day.

I close this important article with a reflection that ought to make an impression upon every rational mind. The knowledge of future events, as far as it tends to influence our conduct, is inconsistent with a state of trial, such as Providence has allotted to man in this life. It would deprive him of hopes and fears, and leave him nothing to deliberate upon, nor any end to prosecute. In a word, it would put an end to his activity, and reduce him to be merely a passive being. Providence therefore has wisely drawn a veil over future events, affording us no light for prying into them but sagacity and experience.

These are a few of the numberless absurd opinions about the conduct of Providence, that have prevailed among Christians, and still prevail among some of them. Many opinions no less absurd have prevailed about speculative points. I confine myself to one or two instances ; for to make a complete list would require a volume. The first I shall mention, and the most noted, is transubstantiation ; which though it has not the least influence on practice, is reckoned so essential to salvation, as to be placed above every moral duty. The following text is appealed to as the sole foundation of that article of faith.

“ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread,
“ and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the
“ disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my bo-

I 5

“ dy.

“ dy. And he took the cup, and gave thanks,
 “ and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of
 “ it : for this is my blood of the new testament,
 “ which is shed for many for the remission of
 “ sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink
 “ henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that
 “ day when I drink it new with you in my Fa-
 “ ther’s kingdom (a).” That this is a meta-
 phor, must strike every one : the passage cannot
 even bear a literal meaning, considering the fi-
 nal clause ; for surely the most zealous Roman
 believes not, that Christians are to drink new
 wine with their Saviour in the kingdom of hea-
 ven. At the same time, it is not so much as in-
 sinuated, that there was here any miraculous tran-
 substantiation of the bread and wine into the bo-
 dy and blood of our Saviour ; nor is it insinua-
 ted, that the apostles believed they were eating
 the flesh of their master, and drinking his blood.
 St. John, the favourite apostle, mentions not a
 word of this ceremony, which he certainly would
 not have omitted, had he imagined it an essential
 article of faith.

But supposing transubstantiation to be more
 clearly expressed in this text, than it really is ;
 yet men of good understanding will be loth to ad-
 mit a meaning that contradicts their five senses.
 They will reflect, that no man now living ever
 saw the original books of the new testament ; nor
 are they certain, that the editions we have, are
 copied directly from the originals. Every remove
 from them is liable to errors, which may justly
 create a suspicion of every text that contradicts
 reason and common sense. Add, that the bulk
 of Christians have not even a copy from the ori-

(a) St Matthew, xxvi. 26. &c.

ginal to build their faith upon, but only a translation into another language.

And this leads to what chiefly determined me to select that instance. God and nature have bestowed upon us the faculty of reasoning, for distinguishing truth from falsehood. If by reasoning with candor and impartiality, we discover a proposition to be true or false, it is not in our power to remain indifferent: we must judge, and according to our judgment we must pronounce. I say more, to pronounce is a duty we owe to our Maker; for to what purpose has he bestowed reason upon us, but in order to direct our belief? At the same time, we may depend on it as an intuitive truth, that God will never impose any belief on us, contradictory not only to our reason, but to our senses.

The following objection however will perhaps relish more with people of plain understanding. Transubstantiation is a very extraordinary miracle, reiterated every day and in every corner of the earth, by priests not always remarkable either for piety or for morality. Now I demand an answer to the following plain question: To what good end or purpose is such a profusion of miracles subservient? I see none. But I discover a very bad one, if they have any influence; which is, that they accustom the Roman Catholics to more cruelty and barbarity, than even the grossest savages are ever guilty of: some of them indeed devour the flesh of their enemies; but none of them, the flesh of their friends, especially their greatest friend. But to do justice to people of that religion, I am confident, that this supposed miracle has no influence whatever upon their manners: to me it appears impossible for any man seriously to believe, that the bread and wine used at the Lord's supper, is actually converted

verted into the body and blood of our Saviour. The Romish church requires the belief of transubstantiation; and a zealous Catholic, out of pure obedience, *thinks* he believes it. Convince once a man that salvation depends on belief, and he will believe any thing; that is, he will imagine that he believes: *Credo quia impossibile est* *.

That our first reformers, who were prone to differ from the Romish faith, should adopt this doctrine, shows the supreme influence of superstition. The Lutherans had not even the excuse of inattention: after serious examination, they added one absurdity more; teaching, that the

* A traveller describing the Virgin Mary's house at Loretto, has the following reflection. "When there are so many saints endued with such miraculous powers, so many relics, and so many impregnated wells, each of them able to cure the most dangerous diseases; one would wonder, that physicians could live there, or others die. But people die here as elsewhere; and even churchmen, who preach upon the miracles wrought by relics, grow sick and die like other men." It is one thing to believe, it is another thing to fancy that we believe. In the year 1666 a Jew named *Sabatai Levi* appeared at Smyrna, pretending to be the true Messiah, and was acknowledged to be such by many. The Grand Signior, for proof of his mission, insisted for a miracle; proposing that he should present himself as a mark to be shot at, and promising to believe that he was the Messiah, if he remained unwounded. *Sabatai*, declining the trial, turned Mahometan to save his life. But observe the blindness of superstition: though *Sabatai* was seen every day walking the streets of Constantinople in the Turkish habit, the Jews insisted that the true *Sabatai* was taken up into heaven, leaving only behind him his shadow; and probably they most piously fancied that they believed so.

bread and wine are converted into the body and blood of our Saviour, and yet remain bread and wine as at first; which is termed by them *consubstantiation*. I am persuaded, that at this time not a single man of them harbours such a thought.

Many persons, proof against a serious argument, are sufficiently clear-sighted to discover falsehood when put in a ridiculous light. It requires, I am sensible, a very delicate hand to attack a grave subject with ridicule as a test of truth; and for that reason, I forbear to offer any thing of my own. But I will set before my readers some excerpts from a book of absolute authority with Roman Catholics. Though transubstantiation be there handled in the most serious manner, with all the ceremonies and punctilios that naturally flow from it, yet to my taste, nothing can be contrived to give it a more ridiculous appearance. The book is the Roman Missal, from which the following is a literal translation.

“ Mass may be deficient in the matter, in the
 “ form, in the minister, or in the action. First,
 “ in the matter. If the bread be not of wheat,
 “ or if there be so great a mixture of other
 “ grain that it cannot be called wheat-bread, or
 “ if any way corrupted, it does not make a sa-
 “ crament. If it be made with rose-water, or
 “ any other distilled water, it is doubtful whe-
 “ ther it make a sacrament or not. Though
 “ corruption have begun, or though it be lea-
 “ vened, it makes a sacrament, but the celebra-
 “ tor sins grievously.

“ If the celebrator, before consecration, ob-
 “ serve that the host is corrupted, or is not of
 “ wheat, he must take another host: if after
 “ consecration, he must still take another and
 “ swallow

“ swallow it, after which he must also swallow
“ the first, or give it to another, or preserve it
“ in some place with reverence. But if he have
“ swallowed the first before observing its defects,
“ he must nevertheless swallow also the perfect
“ host ; because the precept about the perfection
“ of the sacrament, is of greater weight than that
“ of taking it fasting. If the consecrated host
“ disappear by an accident, as by wind, by a mi-
“ racle, or by some animal, another must be con-
“ secrated.

“ If the wine be quite sour or putrid, or made
“ of unripe grapes, or be mixed with so much
“ water as to spoil the wine, it is no sacrament.
“ If the wine have begun to sour or to be cor-
“ rupted, or be quite new, or not mixed with
“ water, or mixed with rose-water or other dis-
“ tilled water, it makes a sacrament, but the ce-
“ lebrator sins grievously.

“ If the priest, before consecration, observe
“ that the materials are not proper, he must stop,
“ if proper materials cannot be got ; but after
“ consecration, he must proceed, to avoid giv-
“ ing scandal. If proper materials can be pro-
“ cured by waiting, he must wait for them,
“ that the sacrifice may not remain imper-
“ fect.

“ Second, in form. If any of the words of
“ consecration be omitted, or any of them be
“ changed into words of a different meaning, it
“ is no sacrament : if they be changed into words
“ of the same meaning, it makes a sacrament ; but
“ the celebrator sins grievously.

“ Third, in the minister. If he does not in-
“ tend to make a sacrament, but to cheat ; if
“ there be any part of the wine, or any wafer
“ that he has not in his eye, and does not intend
“ to consecrate ; if he have before him eleven
“ wafers,

“ wafers, and intends to consecrate only ten, not
“ determining what ten he intends: in these cases
“ the consecration does not hold, because intention
“ is requisite. If he think there are ten only,
“ and intends to consecrate all before him, they
“ are all consecrated; therefore priests ought always
“ to have such intention. If the priest,
“ thinking he has but one wafer, shall, after the
“ consecration, find two sticking together, he
“ must take them both. And he must take off all
“ the remains of the consecrated matter; for
“ they all belong to the same sacrifice. If in
“ consecrating, the intention be not actual by
“ wandering of mind, but virtual in approaching
“ the altar, it makes a sacrament: though priests
“ should be careful to have intention both virtual
“ and actual.

“ Beside intention, the priest may be deficient
“ in disposition of mind. If he be suspended, or
“ degraded, or excommunicated, or under mortal
“ sin, he makes a sacrament, but sins grievously.
“ He may be deficient also in disposition of body.
“ If he have not fasted from midnight, if he have
“ tasted water, or any other drink or meat, even
“ in the way of medicine, he cannot celebrate
“ nor communicate. If he have taken meat or
“ drink before midnight, even though he have
“ not slept nor digested it, he does not sin.
“ But on account of the perturbation of mind,
“ which bars devotion, it is prudent to refrain.

“ If any remains of meat, sticking in the mouth,
“ be swallowed with the host, they do not prevent
“ communicating, provided they be swallowed,
“ not as meat, but as spittle. The same
“ is to be said, if in washing the mouth a drop of
“ water be swallowed, provided it be against our
“ will.

“ Fourth,

“ Fourth, in the action. If any requisite be
 “ wanting, it is no sacrament ; for example, if
 “ it be celebrated out of holy ground, or upon
 “ an altar not consecrated, or not covered with
 “ three napkins ; if there be no wax candles ; if
 “ it be not celebrated between day-break and
 “ noon ; if the celebrator have not said mattins
 “ with lauds ; if he omit any of the sacerdotal
 “ robes ; if these robes and the napkins be not
 “ blessed by a bishop ; if there be no clerk pre-
 “ sent to serve, or one who ought not to serve, a
 “ woman for example ; if there be no chalice,
 “ the cup of which is gold, or silver, or pewter ;
 “ if the vestment be not of clean linen adorned
 “ with silk in the middle, and blessed by a bi-
 “ shop ; if the priest celebrate with his head co-
 “ vered ; if there be no missal present, though he
 “ have it by heart.

“ If a gnat or spider fall into the cup after
 “ consecration, the priest must swallow it with
 “ the blood, if he can : otherwise, let him take
 “ it out, wash it with wine, burn it, and throw
 “ it with the washings into holy ground. If
 “ poison fall into the cup, the blood must be
 “ poured on tow or on a linen cloth, remain
 “ till it be dry, then be burnt, and the ashes
 “ be thrown upon holy ground. If the host be
 “ poisoned, it must be kept in a tabernacle till it
 “ be corrupted.

“ If the blood freeze in winter, put warm
 “ cloths about the cup : if that be not sufficient,
 “ the cup in boiling water.

“ If any of Christ's blood fall on the ground by
 “ negligence, it must be licked up with the
 “ tongue, and the place scraped : the scrapings
 “ must be burnt, and the ashes buried in holy
 “ ground.

“ If

“ If the priest vomit the eucharist, and the
“ species appear entire, it must be licked up most
“ reverently. If a nausea prevent that to be
“ done, it must be kept till it be corrupted.
“ If the species do not appear, let the vomit
“ be burnt, and the ashes thrown upon holy
“ ground.”

As the foregoing article has beyond intention
swelled to an enormous size, I shall add but one
other article, which, at the same time, shall be
extremely short; and that is the creed of Athana-
sius. It is a heap of unintelligible jargon; and
yet we are appointed to believe every article of it,
under the pain of eternal damnation. As it en-
joins belief of rank contradictions, it seems pur-
posely calculated to be a test of slavish submission
to the tyrannical authority of a proud and arrogant
priest*.

C H A P. III.

R E L I G I O U S W O R S H I P.

IN the foregoing chapter are traced the gradual
advances of the sense of Deity, from its im-
perfect state among savages to its maturity among

* Bishop Burnet seems doubtful whether this
creed was composed by Athanasius; though his
doubts, in my apprehension, are scarce sufficient to
weigh against the unanimous opinion of the Christian
church.

enlightened

enlightened nations, displaying to us one great being to whom all other beings owe their existence, who made the world, and who governs it by the most perfect laws. And our perception of Deity, arising from that sense, is fortified by an intuitive proposition, that there necessarily must exist some being who had no beginning. Considering the Deity as the author of our existence, we owe him gratitude; considering him as governor of the world, we owe him obedience: and upon these duties is founded the obligation we are under to worship him. Further, God made man for society, and implanted in his nature the moral sense to direct his conduct in that state. From these premises, may it not with certainty be inferred to be the will of God, that men should obey the dictates of the moral sense in fulfilling every duty of justice and benevolence? These moral duties, it would appear, are our chief business in this life; being enforced not only by a moral but by a religious principle.

Morality, as laid down in a former sketch, consists of two great branches, viz. the moral sense, which unfolds our duty to man, and an active moral principle, which prompts us to perform that duty. Natural religion consists also of two great branches, viz. the sense of Deity, which unfolds our duty to our Maker, and the active principle of devotion, which prompts us to perform our duty to him. The universality of the sense of Deity proves it to be innate: the same reason proves the principle of devotion to be innate; for all men agree in worshipping superior beings, whatever difference there may be in the mode of worship.

Both branches of the duty we owe to God, that of worshipping him, and that of obeying his will with respect to our fellow-creatures, are summed

summed up by the Prophet Micah in the following emphatic words. “ He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good : and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ” The two articles first mentioned, are moral duties regarding our fellow-creatures ; and as to such, what is required of us by the Lord is to do our duty to others, not only as directed by the moral sense, but as being the will of our Maker, to whom we owe absolute obedience. That branch of our duty is reserved for a second section : at present we are to treat of religious worship, included in the third article, viz. the walking humbly with our God.

S E C T. I.

Religious Worship.

THE obligation we are under to worship God, or to walk humbly with him, is, as observed above, founded on the two great principles of gratitude and obedience ; both of them requiring fundamentally a pure heart, and a well-disposed mind. But heart-worship is alone not sufficient : there are over and above required external signs, testifying to others the sense we have of these duties, and a firm resolution to perform them. That such is the will of God, will appear as follows. The principle of devotion, like most of our other principles, partakes of the imperfection

tion of our nature : yet however faint originally, it is capable of being greatly invigorated by cultivation and exercise. Private exercise is not sufficient. Nature, and consequently the God of nature, require public exercise or public worship : for devotion is infectious, like joy or grief (*a*) ; and by mutual communication in a numerous assembly, is greatly invigorated. A regular habit of expressing publicly our gratitude and resignation, never fails to purify the mind, tending to wean it from every unlawful pursuit. This is the true motive of public worship ; not what is commonly inculcated, viz. That it is required from us, as a testimony to our Maker of our obedience to his laws : God, who knows the heart needs no such testimony *. I shall only add upon the general head,

(*a*) Elements of Criticism, vol. 1. p. 180. edit. 5.

* Arnobius (*Adversus gentes*, lib. 1.) accounts rationally for the worship we pay to the Deity : “ Huic
 “ omnes ex more prosternimur, hunc collatis precibus
 “ adoramus, ab hoc iusta, et honesta, et auditu ejus
 “ condigna, deprecamur. Non quo ipse desideret supplices nos esse, aut amet subterni tot millium venerationem videre. Utilitas hæc nostra est, et commodi nostri rationem spectans. Nam quia proni ad culpas, et ad libidinis varios appetitus, vitio sumus infirmitatis ingenitæ, patitur se semper nostris cogitationibus concipi : ut dum illum oramus, et mereri ejus contendimus munera, accipiamus innocentiae voluntatem, et ab omni nos labe delictorum omnium amputatione purgemus.”—[In English thus : “ It is
 “ our custom to prostrate ourselves before him ; and
 “ we ask of him such gifts only as are consistent with
 “ justice and with honour, and suitable to the character
 “ of the Being whom we adore. Not that he receives pleasure or satisfaction from the humble veneration of thousands of his creatures. From this
 we

head, that lawgivers ought to avoid with caution the enforcing public worship by rewards and punishments: human laws cannot reach the heart, in which the essence of worship consists: they may indeed bring on a listless habit of worship, by separating the external act from the internal affection, than which there can be nothing more hurtful to true religion. The utmost that can be safely ventured, is to bring public worship under censorian powers, as a matter of police, for preserving good order, and for preventing bad example.

The religion of Confucius, professed by the *literati* and persons of rank in China and Tonquin, consists in a deep inward veneration for the God or King of heaven, and in the practice of every moral virtue. They have neither temples, nor priests, nor any settled form of external worship: every one adores the supreme Being in the manner he himself thinks best. This is indeed the most refined system of religion that ever took place among men. There is however an invincible objection against it, which is, that it is not fitted for the human race: an excellent religion it would be for angels; but is far too refined, even for sages and philosophers.

Proceeding to deviations from the genuine worship required by our Maker, and gross deviations there have been, I begin with that sort of worship which is influenced by fear, and which for that reason is universal among savages. The A-

" we ourselves derive benefit and advantage; for being the slaves of appetite, and prone to err from the weakness of our nature, when we address ourselves to God in prayer, and study by our actions to merit his approbation, we gain at least the wish, and the inclination, to be virtuous."]

merican savages believe, that there are inferior deities without end, most of them prone to mischief: they neglect the supreme Deity because he is good; and direct their worship to soothe the malevolent inferior deities from doing harm. The inhabitants of the Molucca islands, who believe the existence of malevolent invisible beings subordinate to the supreme benevolent Being, confine their worship to the former, in order to avert their wrath; and one branch of their worship is, to set meat before them, hoping that when the belly is full, there will be less inclination to mischief. The worship of the inhabitants of Java is much the same. The negroes of Benin worship the devil, as Dapper expresses it, and sacrifice to him both men and beasts. They acknowledge indeed a supreme Being, who created the universe, and governs it by his Providence: but they regard him not; "for," say they, "it is needless, if not impertinent, to invoke a being, who, good and gracious, is incapable of injuring or molesting us."

The austerities and penances that are practised in almost all religions, spring from the same root. One way to please invisible malignant powers, is to make ourselves as miserable as possible. Hence the horrid penances of the Faquirs in Hindostan, who outdo in mortification whatever is reported of the ancient Christian anchorites. Some of these Faquirs continue for life in one posture: some never lie down: some have always their arms raised above their head: and some mangle their bodies with knives and scourges. The town of Jagrenate in Hindostan is frequented by pilgrims, some of them from the distance of 300 leagues, which they travel, not by walking or riding, but by measuring the road by the length of their bodies; in which method of loco-moti-

on, some of them consume years, before they complete their pilgrimage. A religious sect made its way some centuries ago into Japan, termed *Bubidoists*, from *Bubs*, the founder. This sect has prevailed over the ancient sect of the Sintos, chiefly by its austerity and mortifications. The spirit of this sect inspires nothing but excessive fear of the gods, who are painted prone to vengeance, and always offended. The people of that religion pass most of their time in tormenting themselves, to expiate imaginary faults; and they are treated by their priests with despotism and cruelty, that is not paralleled but by the inquisitors of Spain. The manners of the people are fierce, cruel, and unrelenting, such as never fail to be inspired by horrible superstition. The notion of invisible malevolent powers, formerly universal, is not to this hour eradicated, even among Christians; for which I appeal to the fastings and flagellations among Roman-Catholics, held by them to be an essential part of religion. People infected with religious horrors, are never seriously convinced, that an upright heart and sound morality make the essence of religion. The doctrine of the Jansenists, concerning repentance and mortification, shows evidently, however they may deceive themselves, that they have an impression of the Deity as a malevolent being. They hold the guilt contracted by Adam's fall to be a heinous sin, which ought to be expiated by acts of mortification, such as the torturing and macerating the body with painful labour, excessive abstinence, continual prayer and contemplation. Their penances, whether for original or voluntary sin, are carried to extravagance; and they who put an end to their lives by such severities, are termed the sacred victims of repentance, consumed by the fire of divine love. Such suicides

cides are esteemed peculiarly meritorious in the eye of Heaven; and it is thought, that their sufferings cannot fail to appease the anger of the Deity. That celibacy is a state of purity and perfection, is a prevailing notion in many countries: among the Pagans, a married man was forbid to approach the altar, for some days after knowing his wife; and this ridiculous notion of pollution, contributed to introduce celibacy among the Roman-Catholic priests. The Emperor Otho, *anno* 1218, became a signal penitent: but instead of atoning for his sins by repentance and restitution, he laid himself down to be trod under foot by the boys of his kitchen; and frequently submitted to the discipline of the whip, inflicted by monks. The Emperor Charles V. toward the end of his days, was sorely depressed in spirit with fear of hell. Monks were his only companions, with whom he spent his time in chanting hymns. As an expiation for his sins, he in private disciplined himself with such severity, that his whip, found after his death, was tinged with his blood. Nor was he satisfied with these acts of mortification: timorous and illiberal solicitude still haunting him, he aimed at something extraordinary, at some new and singular act of piety, to display his zeal, and to merit the favour of Heaven. The act he fixed on was as wild as any that superstition ever suggested to a distempered brain: it was to celebrate his own obsequies. He ordered his tomb to be erected in the chapel of the monastery: his domestics marched there in a funeral procession, holding black tapers: he followed in his shroud: he was laid in his coffin with much solemnity: the service of the dead was chanted; and he himself joined in the prayers offered up for his *requiem*, mingling his tears with those of his attendants.

attendants. The ceremony closed with sprinkling holy water upon the coffin; and the assistants retiring, the doors of the chapel were shut. Then Charles rose out of the coffin, and stole privately to his apartment.

The history of ancient sacrifices is not so accurate, as in every instance to ascertain upon what principle they were founded, whether upon fear, upon gratitude for favours received, or to solicit future favour. Human sacrifices undoubtedly belong to the present head: for being calculated to deprecate the wrath of a malevolent deity, they could have no other motive but fear; and indeed they are a most direful effect of that passion. It is needless to lose time in mentioning instances, which are well known to those who are acquainted with ancient history. A number of them are collected in Historical Law-tracts (*a*): and to these I take the liberty of adding, that the Cimbrians, the Germans, the Gauls, particularly the Druids, practised human sacrifices; for which we have the authority of Julius Cæsar, Strabo, and other authors. A people upon the Mississippi, named *Tensas*, worship the sun; and, like the Natches their neighbours, have a temple for that luminary, with a sacred fire in it, continually burning. The temple having been set on fire by thunder, was all in flames, when some French travellers saw them throw children into the fire, one after another, to appease the incensed deity. The Prophet Micah (*b*), in a passage partly quoted above, inveighs bitterly against such sacrifices: “ Wherewith shall I come before

(*a*) Tract 1.

(*b*) Chap. 6.

“ the Lord, and bow myself before the high
“ God? shall I come before him with burnt-
“ offerings, with calves of a year old? will the
“ Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or
“ with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I
“ give my first-born for my transgression, the
“ fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He
“ hath shewed thee, O man, what is good : and
“ what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do
“ justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly
“ with thy God ?”

The ancient Persians acknowledged Oromazes and Arimanes as their great deities, authors of good and ill to men. But I find not that Arimanes, the evil principle, was ever an object of any religious worship. The Gaures, who profess the ancient religion of Persia, address no worship but to one God, all-good and all-powerful.

Next, of worshipping the Deity in the character of a mercenary being. Under that head come sacrifices and oblations, whether prompted by gratitude for favours received, or by self-interest to procure future favours ; which, for the reason mentioned, I shall not attempt to distinguish. As the deities of early times were thought to resemble men, it is not wonderful, that men endeavoured to conciliate their favour, with such offerings as were the most acceptable to themselves. It is probable, that the first sacrifices of that kind were of sweet-smelling herbs, which in the fire emitted a flavour, that might reach the nostrils of a deity, even at a distance. The burning incense to their gods, was practised in Mexico and Peru ; and at present is practised in the peninsula of Corea. An opportunity so favourable for making religious zeal a fund of riches to the priesthood, is seldom neglected. There was no difficulty to persuade ignorant people, that the
gods

gods could eat as well as smell: what was offered to a deity for food, being carried into the temple was understood to be devoured by him.

With respect to the Jewish sacrifices of burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, sin-offerings, peace-offerings, heave-offerings, and wave-offerings, these were appointed by God himself, in order to keep that stiff-necked people in daily remembrance of their dependence on him, and to preserve them if possible from idolatry. But that untractable race did not adhere to the purity of the institution: they insensibly degenerated into the notion that their God was a mercenary being; and in that character only, was the worship of sacrifices performed to him: the offerings mentioned were liberally bestowed on him, not singly as a token of their dependence, but chiefly in order to avert his wrath, or to gain his favour*.

The religious notions of the Greeks were equally impure: they could not think of any means for conciliating the favour of their gods, more efficacious than gifts. Homer paints his gods as mercenary to an extreme. In the fourth book of the Iliad, Jupiter says, "Of these cities, " honoured the most by the soul of Jove, is sacred Troy. Never stands the altar empty before me, oblations poured forth in my presence, favour that ascends the skies." Speak-

* There is no mention in ancient authors of fish being offered to the gods in sacrifice. The reason I take to be, that the most savoury food of man was reckoned the most agreeable to their gods; that savages never thought of fish till land-animals became scarce; and that the matter as well as form of sacrifices were established in practice, long before men had recourse to fish for food.

ing in the fifth book of a warrior, known afterward to be Diomedes, "Some god he is, some power against the Trojans enraged for vows unpaid : destructive is the wrath of the gods." Diomedes prays to Minerva, "With thine arm ward from me the foe : a year old heifer, O Queen, shall be thine, broad-fronted, unbroke, and wild : her to thee I will offer with prayer, gilding with gold her horns." Precisely of the same kind, are the offerings made by superstitious Roman Catholics to the Virgin Mary, and to saints. Electra, in the tragedy of that name, supplicates Apollo in the following terms.

——— O ! hear Electra too ;
 Who, with unsparing hand, her choicest gifts
 Hath never fail'd to lay before thy altars ;
 Accept the little All that now remains
 For me to give.

The people of Hindostan, as mentioned above, atone for their sins by austere penances ; but they have no notion of presenting gifts to the Deity, nor of deprecating his wrath with the blood of animals. On the contrary, they reckon it a sin to slay any living creature ; which reduces them to vegetable food. This is going too far ; for the Deity could never mean to prohibit animal food, when man's chief dependence originally was upon it. The abstaining, however, from animal food, shows greater humanity in the religion of Hindostan, than of any other known country. The inhabitants of Madagascar are in a stage of religion, common among many nations, which is, the acknowledging one supreme benevolent Deity, and many malevolent inferior deities. Most of their worship is indeed addressed to the latter ;

latter ; but they have so far advanced before several other nations, as to offer sacrifices to the supreme Being, without employing either idols or temples.

Philosophy and sound sense, in polished nations, have purified religious worship, by banishing the profession at least of oblations and sacrifices. The Being that made the world, governs it by laws that are inflexible, because they are the best possible ; and to imagine that he can be moved by prayers, oblations, or sacrifices, to vary his plan of government, is an impious thought, degrading the Deity to a level with ourselves :
 " Hear, O my people, and I will testify against thee : I am God, even thy God. I will take
 " no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat out
 " of thy fold : for every beast of the forest is
 " mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
 " Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood
 " of goats ? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and
 " pay thy vows to the Most High. Call upon
 " me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee,
 " and thou shalt glorify me (a)." " Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it ; thou
 " delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices
 " of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (b)."
 " For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and
 " the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings (c)." In dark ages, there is great shew of religion, with little heart worship : in

(a) Psalm 50.

(b) Psalm 51.

(c) Hosea vi. 6.

ages of philosophy, warm heart-worship, with little shew *.

This

* Agathias urges a different reason against sacrifices. "Ego nullam naturam esse existimo, cui voluptati sint scædata sanguine altaria, et animantium lanienæ. Quod si qua tamen est cui ista sint cordi, non ea mitis et benigna est aliqua, sed fera ac rabida, qualem pavorem poetæ fingunt, et Metum, et Bello-nam, et Malam Fortunam, et Discordiam, quam indomitam appellant."—[*In English thus*: "I cannot conceive, that there should exist a superior being, who takes delight in the sacrifice of animals, or in altars stained with blood. If such there be, his nature is not benevolent, but barbarous and cruel. Such indeed were the gods whom the poets have created: such were Fear and Terror, the goddesses of War, of Evil Fortune, and of Discord."]— Arnobius batters down bloody sacrifices with a very curious argument. "Ecce si bos aliquis, aut quodlibet ex his animal, quod ad placandas cæditur mitigandasque ad numinum furias, vocem hominis fumat, eloquaturque his verbis: Ergone, O Jupiter, aut quis alius deus es, humanum est istud et rectum, aut æquitatis alicujus in æstimatione ponendum, ut cum alius peccaverit, ego occidar, et de me sanguine fieri tibi patiaris satis, qui nunquam te læserim, nunquam sciens aut nesciens, tuum nomen majestatemque violarim, animal, ut scis, mutum, naturæ meæ simplicitatem sequens, nec multiformium morum varietatibus lubricum?"— [*In English thus*: "What if the ox, while he is led out to slaughter to appease the fancied wrath of an offended deity, should assume the human voice, and in these words astonish his conductors: Are these, O merciful God, are these the dictates of humanity, or of justice, that for the crime of another I should forfeit my life. I have never by my will offended thee, and, dumb as I am, and uninformed by reason, my actions, according to the simplicity of my nature,

This is a proper place for the history of idolatry; which, as will anon appear, sprung from religious worship, corrupted by men of shallow understanding and gross conceptions, upon whom things invisible make little impression.

Savages, even of the lowest class, have an impression of invisible powers, though they cannot form any distinct notion of them. But such impression is too faint for the exercise of devotion. Whether inspired with love to a good being, or with fear of an ill being, savages are not at ease without some sort of visible object to animate them. A great stone served that purpose originally; a very low instrument indeed of religious worship; but not altogether whimsical, if it was introduced, which is highly probable, in the following manner. It was an early and a natural custom among savages, to mark with a great stone, the place where their worthies were interred; of which we have hints every where in ancient history, particularly in the poems of Ossian. "Place me," says Calmar, mortally wounded, "at the side of a stone of remembrance, that future times may hear my fame, and the mother of Calmar rejoice over the stone of my renown." Superstition in later times having deified these worthies, their votaries, rejoicing as formerly over the stones dedicated to them, held these stones to be essential in every act of religious worship performed to

"nature, cannot have given thee displeasure, who hast made me as I am."]—If this argument were solid, it would be equally conclusive against animal food.

their new deities *. Tradition points out many stones in different parts of the world, that were used in religious worship. A large stone worshipped by the Pessenuntians, a people of Phrygia, under the name of *Idæa mater*, was, upon a solemn embassy to that people, brought to Rome ; it being contained in the Sybilline books, that unless the Romans got possession of that goddess, they never would prevail over Hannibal. And Pausanias mentions many stones in Greece, dedicated to different divinities ; particularly thirty square stones in Achaia, on which were engraved the names of as many gods. In another place, he mentions a very ancient statue of Venus in the island Delos, which, instead of feet, had only a square stone. This may appear a puzzling circumstance in the history of Greece, considering that all the Grecian gods were originally mortals,

* Frequent mention is made of such stones in the poems of Ossian. " But remember, my son, to place
 " this sword, this bow, and this horn, within that
 " dark and narrow house marked with one gray stone."
p. 55. " Whose fame is in that dark-green tomb ?
 " Four stones with their heads of moss stand there,
 " and mark the narrow house of death." *p.* 67.
 " Let thy bards mourn those who fell. Let Erin give
 " the sons of Lochlin to earth, and raise the mossy
 " stones of their fame ; that the children of the north
 " hereafter may behold the place where their fathers
 " fought." *p.* 78. " Earth here incloses the love-
 " lieft pair on the hill : grass grows between the
 " stones of the tomb. *p.* 208. In the same poems
 we find stones made instruments of worship. The spirit of Loda is introduced threatening Fingal : " Fly
 " to thy land, replied the form : receive the wind
 " and fly. The blasts are in the hollow of my hand :
 " the course of the storm is mine. The King of So-
 " ra is my son : he bends at the stone of my power."
p. 200.

whom

whom it was easy to represent by statues: but in that early period, the Greeks knew no more of statuary than the most barbarous nations. It is perhaps not easy to gather the meaning of savages, with respect to such stones: the most natural conjecture is, that a great stone, dedicated to the worship of a certain deity, was considered as belonging to him. This notion of property had a double effect: the worshippers, by connection of ideas, were led from the stone to the deity: and the stone tended to fix their wandering thoughts. It was probably imagined, over and above, that some latent virtue communicated to the stone, made it holy or sacred. Even among enlightened people, a sort of virtue or sanctity is conceived to reside in the place of worship: why not also in a stone dedicated to a deity? The ancient Ethiopians, in their worship, introduced the figure of a serpent as a symbol of the deity: two sticks laid cross represented Castor and Pollux, Roman divinities: a javelin represented their god Mars; and in Tartary, formerly, the god of war was worshipped under the symbol of an old rusty sabre. The ancient Persians used consecrated fire, as an emblem of the great God. Though the negroes of Congo and Angola have images without number, they are not however idolaters in any proper sense: their belief is, that these images are only organs by which the deities signify their will to their votaries.

If the use that was made of stones and of other symbols in religious worship, be fairly represented, it may appear strange, that the ingenious Greeks sunk down into idolatry, at the very time they were making a rapid progress in the fine arts. Their improvements in statuary, one of these arts, was the cause. They began with attempting to

carve heads of men and women, representing their deified heroes; which were placed upon the stones dedicated to these divinities. In the progress of the art, statues were executed complete in every member; and at last, statues of the gods were made, expressing such dignity and majesty, as insensibly to draw from beholders a degree of devotion to the statues themselves. Hear Quintilian upon that subject. “At quæ Polycleto defuerunt, Phidiæ atque Alcameni dantur. Phidias tamen diis quam hominibus efficiendis melior artifex traditur: in ebore vero, longe citra æmulum, vel si nihil nisi Minervam Athenis aut Olympium in Elide Jovem fecisset, cujus pulchritudo adjecisse aliquid etiam receptæ religioni videtur; adeo majestas operis deum æquavit*.” Here is laid a foundation for idolatry: let us trace its progress. Such statues as are represented by Quintilian, serve greatly to enflame devotion; and during a warm fit of the religious passion, the representation is lost, and the statue becomes a deity; precisely as where King Lear is represented by Garrick: the actor vanishes; and, behold! the King himself. This is not singular. Anger occasions a metamorphosis still more extraordinary: if I happen to strike my gouty toe against a stone, the violence of the pain

* “The deficiencies of Polycletus were made up in Phidias and Alcamenes. Phidias is reckoned to have had more skill in forming the statues of gods than of men. In works of ivory he was unrivalled, although there had been no other proofs of his excellence than the statue of Minerva at Athens, and the Jupiter Olympius in Elis. Its beauty seems to have added to the received religion; the majestic statue resembling so much the god himself.”

converts

converts the stone for a moment into a voluntary agent; and I wreak my resentment on it, as if it really were so. It is true, the image is only conceived to be a deity during the fervour of devotion; and when that subsides, the image falls back to its original representative state. But frequent instances of that kind, have at last the effect among illiterate people, to convert the image into a sort of permanent deity: what such people see, makes a deep impression; what they see not, little or none at all. There is another thing that concurs with eye-sight; to promote this delusion: devotion, being a vigorous principle in the human breast, will exert itself upon the meanest object, when none more noble is in view.

The ancient Persians held the consecrated fire to be an emblem only of the great God: but such veneration was paid to that emblem, and with so great ceremony was it treated, that the vulgar came at last to worship it as a sort of deity. The priests of the Gaures watch the consecrated fire day and night: they keep it alive with the purest wood, without bark: they touch it not with sword nor knife: they blow it not with bellows, nor with the mouth: even the priest is prohibited to approach it, till his mouth be covered with fine linen, lest it be polluted with his breath: if it happen to go out, it must be re-kindled by striking fire from flint, or by a burning glass.

The progress of idolatry will more clearly appear, from attending to the religion of the Greeks and Romans. The Greeks, as mentioned above, made use of stones in divine worship, long before idolatry was introduced: and we learn from Varro, that for a hundred and seventy years after Numa, the Romans had no statues nor images in their temples. After statues of the gods came in

in fashion, they acquired by degrees more and more respect. The Greek and Roman writers, talk of divine virtue being communicated to statues ; and some of the Roman writers talk familiarly, of the *numen* of a deity residing in his statue. Arnobius, in his book against the Gentiles, introduces a Gentile delivering the following opinion. “ We do not believe, that the metal which com-
 “ poses a statue, whether gold, or silver, or
 “ brass, is a god, But we believe, that a so-
 “ lemn dedication brings down the god to inha-
 “ bit his image ; and it is the god only that we
 “ worship in that image.” This explains the Roman ceremony, of inviting to their side the tutelar deities of towns besieged by them, termed *evocatio tutelarium deorum*: the Romans, cruel as they were, overflowed with superstition ; and as they were averse from combating the tutelar deities even of their enemies, they endeavoured to gain these deities by large promises, and assurance of honourable treatment. As they could not hope that a statue would change its place, their notion must have been, that by this ceremony, the tutelar deity might be prevailed upon to withdraw its *numen*, and leave the statue a dead lump of matter. When Stilpo was banished by the Areopagus of Athens for affirming, that the statue in the temple of Minerva was not the goddess, but a piece of matter carved by Phidias ; he surely was not condemned for saying, that the statue was made by Phidias, a fact universally known: his heresy consisted in denying that the *numen* of Minerva resided in the statue. Augustus, having twice lost his fleet by storm, forbade Neptune to be carried in procession along with the other gods ; imagining he had avenged himself of Neptune, by neglecting the favourite statue in which his *numen* resided.

When

When saints in the Christian church were deified, even their images became objects of worship; from a fond imagination, that such worship draws down into the images, the souls of the saints they represent: which is the same doctrine that Arnobius, in the passage above mentioned, ascribes to the Gentiles; and is not widely different from the belief of the Pagan Tartars and Ostiaks, by and by to be mentioned. In the eleventh century, there was a violent dispute about images in the Greek church; many asserting, that in the images of our Saviour and of the saints, there resides an inherent sanctity, which is a proper object of worship; and that Christians ought not to confine their worship to the persons represented, but ought also to extend it to their images.

As ignorant and savage nations can form no conception of Deity, but of a being like a man, only superior in power and greatness, images are made of the Deity in several nations conformable to this conception. It is easy to make some resemblance of a man; but how is power and greatness to be represented? To perform this with propriety, would require a Hogarth. Savages go more bluntly to work: they endeavour to represent a man with many heads, and with a still greater number of hands. The northern Tartars seem to have no deities but certain statues or images coarsely formed out of wood, and bearing some distant resemblance to the human figure. To palliate so gross an absurdity, as that a god can be fabricated by the hands of man, they imagine this image to be endued with a soul: to say whence that soul came, would puzzle the wisest of them. That soul is conceived to be too elevated for dwelling constantly in a piece of matter: they believe that it resides in some more honourable

able place ; and that it only visits the image or idol, when it is called down by prayers and supplications. They sacrifice to this idol, by rubbing its mouth with the fat of fish, and by offering it the warm blood of some beast killed in hunting. The last step of the ceremony is, to honour the soul of the idol with a joyful shout, as a sort of convoy to it when it returns home. The Ostiacs have a wooden idol, termed, *The Old Man of Oby*, who is guardian of their fishery : it hath eyes of glass, and a head with short horns. When the ice dissolves, they crowd to this idol, requesting that he will be propitious to their fishery. If unsuccessful, he is loaded with reproaches : if successful, he is entitled to a share of the capture. They make a feast for him, rubbing his snout with choice fat ; and, when the entertainment is over, they accompany the soul of the idol a little way, beating the air with their cudgels. The Ostiacs have another idol, that is fed with milk so abundantly, as to come out on both sides of the spoon, and to fall down upon the vesture ; which, however, is never washed, so little is cleanliness thought essential to religion by that people. It is indeed wonderfully absurd, to think, that invisible souls require food like human creatures ; and yet the same absurdity prevailed in Greece.

The ancient Germans, a sober and sensible people, had no notion of representing their gods by statues, nor of building temples to them. They worshipped in consecrated groves (*a*). The Egyptians, from a just conception that an invisible being can have no resemblance to one that is

(*a*) Tacitus de moribus Germanorum, cap. 9.

visible, employed hieroglyphical figures for denoting metaphorically the attributes of their gods; and they employed, not only the figures of birds and beasts, but of vegetables; leeks, for example, and onions. This metaphorical adjunct to religion, innocent in itself, sunk the Egyptians to the lowest degree of idolatry. As hieroglyphical figures, composed frequently of heterogeneous parts, resemble not any being human or divine; the vulgar, losing sight of the emblematic signification, which is not readily understood but by poets and philosophers, took up with the plain figures as real divinities. How otherwise can it be accounted for, that the ox, the ape, the onion, were in Egypt worshipped as deities? But this must be understood of the vulgar only. It is scarce supposable, that the better sort of people could think so grossly; and we have the authority of Plutarch for doubting. In his chapter upon Isis and Osiris, he observes, that the Egyptians worshipped the bull, the cat, and other animals; not as divinities, but as representatives of them, like an image seen in a glass; or, as he expresses it in another part of the same chapter, “just as “we see the resemblance of the sun in a drop of “water.” However this be, the Egyptian worship is an illustrious instance of the influence of devotion: how powerful must it be in its purity, when even in a wrong direction, it can force its way against every obstacle of common sense! And such respect was paid to these animals, if we can trust Diodorus Siculus, that in a great famine, the Egyptians ventured not to touch the sacred animals, though they were forced to devour one another. The veneration paid to a cow in Hindostan arose probably from the same cause, viz. its having been used as a symbol of the Deity. A snake of a particular kind, about a yard long, and about the

the thickness of a man's arm, is worshipped by the Whidans in Guinea. It has a large round head, piercing eyes, a short pointed tongue, and a smooth skin, beautifully speckled. It has a strong antipathy to all the venomous kind; in other respects, innocent and tame. To kill them being a capital crime, they travel about unmolested, even into bedchambers. They occasioned, ann. 1697, a ridiculous persecution. A hog, teased by one of them, gnashed it with his tusks till it died. The priests carried their complaint to the king; and no one presuming to appear as counsel for the hogs, orders were issued for slaughtering the whole race. At once were brandished a thousand cutlasses; and the race would have been extirpated, had not the king interposed, representing to the priests, that they ought to rest satisfied with the innocent blood they had spilt. Rancour and cruelty never rage more violently, than under the mask of religion.

It is amazing how prone the most polished nations formerly were to idolatry. The Tyrians, besieged by Alexander, chained down Hercules, their tutelar deity, to prevent him from deserting to the enemy; which is said to have been also practised in Sparta. The city of Ambracia being taken by the Romans, and every statue of their gods being carried to Rome; the Ambracians complained bitterly, that not a single divinity was left them to worship. How much more rational are the Hindostan bramins, who teach their disciples, that idols are emblems only of the Deity, intended merely to fix the attention of the populace!

The first statues in Greece and Tuscany, were made with wings, to signify the swift motion of the gods. These statues were so clumsy, as
scarce

scarce to resemble human creatures, not to talk of a divinity. But the admirable statues executed in later times, were imagined to resemble most accurately the deities represented by them : whence the vulgar notion, that gods have wings, and that angels have wings.

I proceed to what in the history of idolatry may be reckoned the second part. Statues, we have seen, were at first used as representatives only of the Deity ; but came afterward to be metamorphosed into divinities. The absurdity did not stop there. People, not satisfied with the visible deities erected in temples for public worship, became fond to have private deities of their own, whom they worshipped as their tutelar deities ; and this practice spread so wide, as that among many nations every family had household gods cut in wood or stone. Every family in Kamskatka has a tutelar deity in the shape of a pillar, with the head of a man, which is supposed to guard the house against malevolent spirits. They give it food daily, and anoint the head with the fat of fish. The Prophet Isaiah (a) put this species of deification in a most ridiculous light : “ He burneth part thereof in the fire : with part thereof he roasteth flesh : of the residue he maketh a god, even his graven image : he falleth down, worshipping, and praying to it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god.” Multiplication could not fail to sink household-gods into a degree of contempt : expectation of good from them, might produce some cold ceremonial worship ; but there could be no real devotion at heart. The Chinese manner of treating their household-gods, will vouch

(a) Chap. 44.

for me. When a Chinese does not obtain what he prays for, "Thou spiritual dog," he will say, "I lodge thee well, thou art beautifully gilded, treated with perfumes and burnt-offerings; and yet thou with-holdest from me the necessities of life." Sometimes they fasten a cord to the idol, and drag it through the dirt. The inhabitants of Ceylon treat their idols in the same manner. Thor, Woden, and Friga, were the great deities of the Scandinavians. They had at the same time inferior deities, who were supposed to have been men translated into heaven for their good works. These they treated with very little ceremony, refusing to worship them if they were not propitious; and even punishing them with banishment; but restoring them after a time, in hopes of amendment. Domestic idols are treated by the Ostiaks not more reverently than by the people mentioned. But they have public idols, some particularly of brass, which are highly revered: the solidity of the metal is in their imagination connected with immortality; and great regard is paid to these idols, for the knowledge and experience they must have acquired in an endless course of time.

Saints, or tutelar deities, are sometimes not better treated among Roman Catholics, than among Pagans. "When we were in Portugal," says Captain Brydone, "the people of Castellan-branco were so enraged at St Antonio, for suffering the Spaniards to plunder their town, contrary, as they affirmed, to his express agreement with them, that they broke many of his statues to pieces; and one that had been more revered than the rest, they took the head off, and in its stead placed one of St Francis. The great St Januarius himself was in imminent danger, during the last famine at Naples. They

“ They loaded him with abuse and invective ;
 “ and declared point-blank, that if he did not
 “ procure them corn by such a time, he should
 “ be no longer their saint.” The tutelar saint
 of Cattania, at the foot of Mount Etna, is St
 Agatha. A torrent of lava burst over the walls,
 and laid waste great part of that beautiful city.
 Where was St Agatha at this time ? The peo-
 ple say, that they had given her just provocation ;
 but that she has long ago been reconciled to them,
 and has promised never to suffer the lava to hurt
 them again. At the foot of Mount Etna, a sta-
 tue of a saint is placed as a memorial, for having
 prevented the lava from running up the mountain
 of Taurominum, and destroying that town ; the
 saint having conducted the lava down a low val-
 ley to the sea.

When a traveller once happens to deviate from
 the right road, there is no end of wandering.
 Porphyrius reports, that in Anubis, an Egyptian
 city, a real man was worshipped as a god ; which
 is also asserted by Minucius Fœlix, in his apolo-
 gy for the Christians. A thousand writers have
 said, that the Tartars believe their high-priest,
 termed *Dalai Lama*, to be immortal. But that
 is a mistake : his death is published through the
 whole country ; and couriers, sent even to Peking,
 intimate it to the Emperor of China : his effigy,
 at the same time, is taken down from the portal
 of the great church, and that of his successor is
 put in its stead. The system of the metempsy-
 chosis, adopted in that country, has occasioned
 the mistake. They believe, that the holy spirit,
 which animates a Dalai Lama, passes upon his
 death into the body of his successor. The spirit
 therefore is believed to be immortal, not the bo-
 dy. The Dalai Lama, however, is the object
 of profound veneration. The Tartar princes are
 daily

daily sending presents to him, and consulting him as an oracle: they even undertake a pilgrimage in order to worship him in person. In a retired part of the temple, he is shown covered with precious stones, and sitting cross-legged. They prostrate themselves before him at a distance, for they are not permitted to kiss his toe. The priests make traffic even of his excrements, which are greedily purchased at a high price, and are kept in a golden box hanging from the neck, as a charm against every misfortune. Like the cross of Jesus, or the Virgin's milk, we may believe, there never will be wanting plenty of that precious stuff to answer all demands: the priests out of charity will furnish a quota, rather than suffer votaries to depart with their money for want of goods to purchase. The person of the Japan Pope, or Ecclesiastical Emperor, is held so sacred, as to make the cutting his beard, or his nails, a deadly sin. But absurd laws are never steadily executed. The beard and the nails are cut in the night-time, when the Pope is supposed to be sleeping; and what is taken away by that operation, is understood to be stolen from him, which is no impeachment upon his Holiness.

That the Jews were idolaters when they sojourned in the land of Goshen, were it not presumable from their commerce with the Egyptians, would however be evident from the history of Moses. Notwithstanding their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptian king, notwithstanding the daily miracles wrought among them in the wilderness; so addicted were they to a visible deity, that, during even the momentary absence of Moses conversing with God on the mount, they fabricated a golden calf, and worshipped it as their god. "And the Lord said unto Moses, "Go, get thee down: for thy people which
" thou

“ thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt,
 “ have corrupted themselves: they have turned
 “ aside quickly out of the way which I com-
 “ manded them: they have made them a mol-
 “ ten calf, have worshipped it, have sacrificed
 “ thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O
 “ Israel, which have brought thee up out of the
 “ land of Egypt (a).” The history of the Jews
 shows how difficult it is to reclaim from idolatry
 a brutish people, addicted to superstition, and
 and fettered by inveterate habit. What profusi-
 on of blood, to bring that obstinate and perverse
 people to the true religion! all in vain. The
 book of Judges, in particular, is full of reitera-
 ted relapses, from their own invisible God, to
 the visible gods of other nations. And in all pro-
 bability, their anxious desire for a visible king,
 related in the first book of Samuel, arose from
 their being deprived of a visible god. There
 was a necessity for prohibiting images (b); which
 would have soon been converted into deities visi-
 ble: and it was extremely prudent, to supply the
 want of a visible god, with endless shews and ce-
 remonies; which accordingly became the capital
 branch of the Jewish worship.

It appears to me from the whole history of the
 Jews, that a gross people are not susceptible but of
 a gross religion; and without an enlightened un-
 derstanding, that it is vain to think of eradicating
 superstition and idolatry. And after all the co-
 venants made with the Jews, after all the chas-
 tisements and all the miracles lavished on them,
 that they were not however reclaimed from the

(a) Exod. xxxii. 7.

(b) Deuteronomy, xvi. 22.

most groveling idolatry, is evident from the two golden calves fabricated by Jeroboam, saying, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (a)." The people also of Judah fell back to idol-worship under Rehoboam, son of Solomon (b). Jehu, king of the ten tribes, did not tolerate the worship of other gods (c); but he continued to worship the two golden calves fabricated by Jeroboam (d). Down to the days of King Hezekiah, the Jews worshipped the brazen serpent erected by Moses in the wilderness. The Jews seem indeed to have been a very perverse people: the many promises and threatenings announced by their prophets, and the many miracles wrought among them, had no permanent effect to restrain them from idolatry; and yet, during their captivity in Babylon, several of them submitted to be burnt alive, rather than to join in idol worship (e). Captivity cured them radically of idolatry; and from that period to this day, they have not been guilty of a single relapse. Xiphilin, in his abridgement of Dion Cassius, relating their war with Pompey, many centuries after the Babylonish captivity, gives the following account of them. "Their customs are quite different from those of other nations. Beside a peculi-

(a) 1 Kings, xii. 28.

(b) 1 Kings, xiv. 23.

(c) 2 Kings, x. 25.

(d) 2 Kings, x. 29.

(e) Daniel, chap. 3.

“ ar manner of living, they acknowledge none
 “ of the common deities : they acknowledge but
 “ one, whom they worship with great venerati-
 “ on. There never was an image in Jerusalem ;
 “ because they believe their God to be invisible
 “ and ineffable. They have built him a temple
 “ of great size and beauty, remarkable in the
 “ following particular, that it is open above,
 “ without any roof.”

There lies no solid objection against images among an enlightened people, when used merely to rouse devotion. But as images tend to pervert the vulgar, they ought not to be admitted into churches : pictures are less liable to be misapprehended ; and the Ethiopians accordingly indulge pictures, though they prohibit statues, in their churches. The general council of Frankfort permitted the use of images in churches ; but strictly prohibited any worship to be addressed to them. So prone however to idolatry are the low and illiterate, that the prohibition lost ground both in France and in Germany ; and idol-worship became again general.

It is extremely probable, that the sun and moon were early held to be deities, and that they were the first visible objects of worship. It must indeed be acknowledged, that of all the different kinds of idolatry, it is the most excusable. Upon the sun depends health, vigour, and cheerfulness : during his retirement, all is dark and disconsolate : when he performs his majestic round, to bless his subjects, and to bestow fecundity upon every animal and vegetable, can a mere savage with-hold gratitude and veneration ! Hear an old Pagan bard upon that subject. “ O thou
 “ who rollest above, round as the shield of my
 “ fathers ! Whence are thy beams, O sun, thy
 “ everlasting light ? Thou comest forth in thy
 “ awful

“ awful beauty, and the stars hide their faces :
“ thou movest alone, for who can be a compa-
“ nion of thy course ? The oaks of the moun-
“ tain fall : the mountains decay with years :
“ the ocean shrinks and grows again : the moon
“ herself is lost in heaven : but thou art for ever
“ the same, rejoicing in the brightness of thy
“ course. When tempests darken the world,
“ when thunder rolls, and lightning flies, thou
“ lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and
“ laughest at the storm (a).” Worship to the
sun as a real deity, was in former times univer-
sal ; and prevails in many countries even at pre-
sent. The American savages worship the sun,
as sovereign of the universe, known by the name
of *Arisikoui* among the Hurons, and of *Agriškoué*
among the Iroquois. They offer him tobacco,
which they term *smoking the sun* : the chief man
in the assembly lights the calumet, and offers it
thrice to the rising sun ; imploring his protection,
and recommending the tribe to his care. The
chief proceeds to smoke ; and every one smokes
in his turn. This ceremony is performed on im-
portant occasions only : less matters are reserved
for their Manitou. The Mississippi people offer
to the sun the first of what they take in hunting ;
which their commander artfully converts to his
own use. The Apalachites, bordering on Flori-
da, worship the sun ; but sacrifice nothing to
him that has life : they hold him to be the parent
of life, and think that he can take no pleasure in
the destruction of any living creature : their de-
votion is exerted in perfumes and songs. The
Mexicans, while a free people, presented to the

(a) Ossian.

sun a share of their meat and drink. The inhabitants of Darien believe in the sun as their god, and in the moon as his wife, paying equal adoration to each. The people of Borneo worship the sun and moon as real divinities. The Samoides worship both, bowing to them morning and evening in the Persian manner.

But if the sun and moon were the first objects of idolatry, knowledge and reflection reformed many from the error of holding these luminaries to be deities. "That original intelligence," say the Magians, "who is the first principle of all things, discovers himself to the mind and understanding only: but he hath placed the sun as his image in the visible universe; and the beams of that bright luminary, are but a faint copy of the glory that shines in the higher heavens." The Persians, as Herodotus reports, had neither temples, nor altars, nor images: for, says that author, they do not think, like the Greeks, that there is any resemblance between gods and men. The Gaures, who to this day profess the ancient religion of Persia, celebrate divine worship before the sacred fire, and turn with peculiar veneration toward the rising sun, as the representative of God; but they adore neither the sun, nor the sacred fire. They are professed enemies to every image of the Deity cut with hands: and hence the havock made by the ancient Persians, upon the statues and temples of The Grecian gods. Such sublimity of thought was above the reach of other uninspired nations, excepting only the Hindos and Chinese.

I close the history of idolatry with a brief recapitulation of the outlines. Admitting the sun and moon to have been the first objects of idolatry, yet as Polytheism was once universal, they

make only two of the many gods that were every where worshipped. We have seen, that the sacred fire was employed in the worship of the sun, and that images were employed in the worship of other deities. Images were originally used for the sole purpose of animating devotion: such was their use in Persia and Hindostan; and such was their use in every country among philosophers. The Emperor Julian, in an epistle to Theodore concerning the images of the gods says, "We believe not that these images are gods: we only use them in worshipping the gods." In the progress toward idolatry, the next step is, to imagine, that a deity loves his image, that he makes it his residence, or at least communicates some virtue to it. The last step is, to imagine the image itself to be a deity; which gained ground imperceptibly as statuary advanced toward perfection. It would be incredible that men of sense should ever suffer themselves to be impressed with so wild a delusion, were it not the overbearing influence of religious superstition. *Credo quia impossibile est*, is applicable to idolatry as well as to transubstantiation. The worshipping the sun and moon as deities, is idolatry in the strictest sense. With respect to images, the first step of the progress is not idolatry: the next is mixed idolatry: and the last is rank idolatry.

So much upon idolatry. I proceed to what approaches the nearest to it, which is worship addressed to deified mortals. The ancient gods were exalted so little above men, that it was no hard task for the imagination to place in heaven, men who had made a figure on earth. The Grecian heaven was entirely peopled with such men, as well as that of many other nations. Men are deified every day by the Romish church, under the denomination of saints: persons

sons are frequently selected for that honour who scarce deserved a place on earth, and some who never had a place there. The Roman Catholics copy the Pagans, in worshipping these subordinate divinities by prayers and oblations : and they are well rewarded, by being taken under protection of these saints in quality of tutelar deities. One branch of the office bestowed on these saints, is to explain the wants of their votaries to the King of heaven, and to supplicate for them. The mediatorial office prevails with respect to earthly potentates, as well as heavenly : being struck with awe and timidity in approaching those exalted above us, we naturally take hold of some intermediate person to solicit for us. In approaching the Almighty, the mind, sinking down into humility and profound veneration, stops short, relying upon some friend in heaven to intercede in its behalf. Temples among the Cochinchinese are constructed with a deep and dark niche, which is their *sanctum sanctorum*. They hold, that no representation, whether by painting or sculpture, can be made of God, who is invisible. The niche denotes his incomprehensibility ; and the good men placed by them in heaven, are believed to be their intercessors at the throne of grace. The prayers of the Chinguliese are seldom directed to the supreme being, but to his vicegerents, Intercessors, at the same time, contribute to the ease of their votaries : a Roman Catholic need not assume a very high tone in addressing a tutelar saint chosen by himself.

False notions of Providence have prompted groveling mortals to put confidence in mediators and intercessors of a still lower class, viz. living mortals, who by idle austerities have acquired a reputation for holiness. Take the following in-

stance, the strongest of the kind that can be figured. Louis XI. of France, sensible of the approach of death, sent for a hermit of Calabria, named *Francisco Martarillo*; and throwing himself at the hermit's feet in a flood of tears, entreated him to intercede with God, that his life might be prolonged; as if the voice of a Calabrian friar, says Voltaire, could alter the course of Providence, by preserving a weak and perverse soul in a worn-out body.

Having discussed the persons that are the objects of worship, the next step in order is, to take under view the forms and ceremonies employed in religious worship. Forms are necessary where-ever a number of persons join in one operation: they are essential in an army, and little less essential at public worship. The use of ceremonies is to excite devotion: but to preserve a just medium, requires great delicacy of taste; for though ceremonies are necessary at public worship to prevent languor, yet superfluity of ceremonies quenches devotion, by occupying the mind too much upon externals. The Roman-Catholic worship is crowded with ceremonies: it resembles the Italian opera, which is all sound, and no sentiment. The Presbyterian form of worship is too naked: it is proper for philosophers more than for the populace. This is fundamentally the cause of the numerous secessions from the church of Scotland that have made a figure of late: people dislike the established forms, when they find less comfort in public worship than is expected; and without being sensible of the real cause, they chuse pastors for themselves, who supply the want of ceremonies by loud speaking, with much external fervor and devotion.

The

The frequent ablutions or washings among the Mahometans and others, as acts of devotion, show the influence that the slightest resemblances have on the ignorant. Because purification, in several languages, is a term applicable to the mind as well as to the body, shallow thinkers, misled by the double meaning, imagine that the mind, like the body, is purified by water.

The sect of Ali use the Alcoran translated into the Persian language, which is their native tongue. The sect of Omar esteem this to be a gross impiety; being persuaded, that the Alcoran was written in Arabic, by the Angel Gabriel, at the command of God himself. The Roman Catholics are not then the only people who profess to speak nonsense to God Almighty; or, which is the same, who profess to pray in an unknown tongue.

At meals, the ancients poured out some wine as a libation to the gods: Christians pronounce a short prayer, termed a *grace*.

The gross notion of Deity entertained by the ancients, is exemplified in their worshipping and sacrificing on high places; in order, as they thought, to be more within sight. Jupiter in Homer praises Hector for sacrificing to him frequently upon the top of Ida; and Strabo observes, that the Persians, who used neither images nor altars, sacrificed to the gods in high places. Balak carried Balaam the prophet to the top of Pisgah, and other mountains, to sacrifice there, and to curse Israel. The votaries of Baal always worshipped in high places. Even the sage Tacitus was infected with that absurdity. Speaking of certain high mountains where the gods were worshipped, he expresses himself thus: *Maxime*

cælo appropinquare, precesque mortalium a Deo nusquam propius audiri *.

Ceremonies that tend to unhinge morality, belong more properly to the following section, treating of the connection between religion and morality.

It is now full time to take under consideration an objection to the sense of Deity hinted above, arguing from the gross conceptions of deity among many nations, that this sense cannot be innate. The objection is not indeed stated in the following passage, borrowed from a justly celebrated author; but as it may be implied, the passage shall be fairly transcribed. “The universal propensity to believe invisible intelligent power, being a general attendant on human nature, if not an original instinct, may be considered as a kind of stamp which the Deity has set upon his work; and nothing surely can more dignify mankind, than to be the only earthly being who bears the stamp or image of the universal Creator. But consult this image as it commonly is in popular religions: how is the Deity disfigured! what caprice, absurdity, and immorality, are attributed to him (a)!” A satisfactory answer to the objection implied in this passage, will occur, upon recollecting the progress of men and nations from infancy to maturity. Our external senses, necessary for self-preservation, soon arrive at perfection: the more refined senses of propriety, of right and wrong, of Deity, of being accountable

* “As approaching nearer to heaven, the prayers of mortals are there more distinctly heard.”

(a) Natural History of Religion.

creatures,

creatures, and many others of the same kind, are of slower growth: the sense of right and wrong in particular, and the sense of Deity, seldom reach perfection, but by good education and much study. If such be the case among enlightened nations, what is to be expected from savages who are in the lowest stage of understanding? To a savage of New Holland, whose sense of deity is extremely obscure, one may talk without end of a being who created the world, and who governs it by wise laws; but in vain; for the savage will be never the wiser. The same savage hath also a glimmering of the moral sense, as all men have; and yet in vain will you discourse to him of approbation and disapprobation, of merit and demerit: of these terms he has no clear conception. Hence the endless aberrations of rude and barbarous nations, from pure religion as well as from pure morality. Of the latter there are many instances collected in the preceding tract; and of the former, instances still more plentiful in the present tract. The sense of deity in dark times has indeed been strangely distorted by certain biases and passions that enslave the rude and illiterate: but these yield gradually to the rational faculty as it ripens, and at last leave religion free to sound philosophy. Then it is that men, listening to the innate sense of deity purified from every bias, acquire a clear conviction of one supreme Deity who made and governs the world.

The foregoing objection then, impartially considered, weighs not against the sense of deity more than against the moral sense. If it have weight, it resolves into a complaint against Providence for the weakness of the sense of deity in rude and illiterate nations. If such complaint be solidly founded, it pierces extremely deep: why have

not all nations, even in their nascent state, the sense of deity, and the moral sense, in purity and perfection? why do they not possess all the arts of life without necessity of culture or experience? why are we born poor and helpless infants, instead of being produced complete in every member, internal and external, as Adam and Eve were? The plan of Providence is far above the reach of our weak criticisms. I shall only observe, that as, with respect to individuals, there is a progress from infancy to maturity; so there is a similar progress in every nation, from its savage state to its maturity in arts and sciences. A child that has just conceptions of the Deity and of his attributes, would be a great miracle; and would not such knowledge in a savage be equally so? Nor can I discover what benefit a child or a savage could reap from such knowledge; provided it remained a child or a savage in every other respect. The genuine fruits of religion, are gratitude to the Author of our being, veneration to him as the supreme Being, absolute resignation to the established laws of his Providence, and chearful performance of every duty: but a child has not the slightest idea of gratitude nor of veneration, and very little of moral duties; and a savage, with respect to these, is not much superior to a child. The formation and government of the world, as far as we know, are excellent: we have great reason to presume the same with respect to what we do not know; and every good man will rest satisfied with the following reflection, That we should have been men from the hour of our birth, complete in every part, had it been conformable to the system of unerring Providence.

S E C T. II.

Morality considered as a branch of duty to our Maker..

HAVING travelled long on a rough road, not a little fatiguing, the agreeable part lies before us ; which is, to treat of morality as a branch of religion. It was that subject which induced me to undertake the history of natural religion ; a subject that will afford salutary instruction, and will inspire true piety, if instruction can produce that effect.

Bayle starts a question, Whether a people may not be happy in society, and be qualified for good government, upon principles of morality singly, without any sense of religion ? The question is ingenious, and may give opportunity for subtile reasoning ; but it is useless, because the fact supposed cannot happen. The principles of morality and of religion are equally rooted in our nature : they are indeed weak in children and in savages ; but they grow up together, and advance toward maturity with equal steps. Wherever the moral sense is in perfection, a sense of religion cannot be wanting ; and if a man who has no sense of religion, live decently in society, he is more indebted for his conduct to good temper than to sound morals.

We have the authority of the Prophet Micah, formerly quoted, for holding, that religion, or, in other words, our duty to God, consists in doing justice, in loving mercy, and in walking humbly with him. The last is the foundation of religious worship, discussed in the foregoing section: the two former belong to the present head. And if we have gratitude to our Maker and Benefactor, if we owe implicit obedience to his will as our rightful sovereign, we ought not to separate the worship we owe to him, from justice and benevolence to our fellow-creatures; for to be unjust to them, to be cruel or hard-hearted, is a transgression of his will, no less gross than a total neglect of religious worship. “ Master, which
 “ is the great commandment in the law? Jesus
 “ said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy
 “ God with all thy heart, with all thy soul,
 “ and with all thy mind. This is the first and
 “ great commandment. And the second is like
 “ unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy-
 “ self. On these two commandments hang all
 “ the law and the prophets (a).” “ Then shall
 “ the King say unto them on his right hand,
 “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the
 “ kingdom prepared for you. For I was hungry,
 “ and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye
 “ gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took
 “ me in: naked, and ye cloathed me: sick, and
 “ ye visited me: in prison, and ye came unto me.
 “ Then shall the righteous answer, saying, Lord,
 “ when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or
 “ thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we
 “ thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked,
 “ and cloathed thee? When saw we thee sick, or

(a) Matthew, xxii. 36.

“ in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King
 “ shall answer, Verily I say unto you, in as much
 “ as ye have done it unto one of the least of these
 “ my brethren, ye have done it unto me (a).”
 “ Pure religion and undefiled before God, is this,
 “ To visit the fatherless and widow in their af-
 “ fliction ; and to keep himself unspotted from
 “ the world (b).” “ *Hostias et victimas Do-*
 “ *mino offeram quas in usum mei protulit, ut re-*
 “ *jiciam ei suum munus ? Ingratum est ; cum*
 “ *fit litabilis hostia bonus animus, et pura mens,*
 “ *et sincera conscientia. Igitur qui innocentiam*
 “ *colit, Domino supplicat ; qui justitiam, Deo*
 “ *libat ; qui fraudibus abstinet, propitiat Deum ;*
 “ *qui hominem periculo subripit, optimam victi-*
 “ *nam cædit. Hæc nostra sacrificia, hæc Dei*
 “ *sacra sunt. Sic apud nos religiosior est ille,*
 “ *qui justior * (c).*” The laws of Zaleucus,
 lawgiver to the Locrians, who lived before the

(a) Matthew, xxv. 34.

(b) James, i. 27.

* “ Shall I offer to God for a sacrifice those crea-
 “ tures which his bounty has given me for my use ?
 “ it were ingratitude to throw back the gift upon the
 “ giver. The most acceptable sacrifice is an upright
 “ mind, an untainted conscience, and an honest
 “ heart. The actions of the innocent ascend to God
 “ in prayer ; the observance of justice is more grate-
 “ ful than incense ; the man who is sincere in his deal-
 “ ings, secures the favour of his Creator ; and the
 “ delivery of a fellow-creature from danger or de-
 “ struction, is dearer in the eyes of the Almighty than
 “ the sacrifice of blood.”

(c) Minucius Felix.

days of Pythagoras, are introduced with the following preamble. “ No man can question the existence of Deity who observes the order and harmony of the universe, which cannot be the production of chance. Men ought to bridle their passions, and to guard against every vice. God is pleased with no sacrifice but a sincere heart : and differs widely from mortals, whose delight are splendid ceremonies and rich offerings. Let justice therefore be studied ; for by that only can a man be acceptable to the Deity. Let those who are tempted to do ill, have always before their eyes the severe judgments of the gods against wicked men. Let them always keep in view the hour of death, that fatal hour which is attended with bitter remorse for transgressing the rules of justice. If a bad disposition incline you to vice, pray to Heaven at the foot of the altar, to mend your heart.”

Morality is thus included in religion. Some nations, however, leave not this proposition to reasoning or conviction, but ingross many moral duties in their religious creed. In the 67th chapter of the Sadder, a lie is declared to be a great sin, and is discharged even where it tends to bring about good. So much purer is the morality of the ancient Persians than of the present Jesuits. The religion of the people of Pegu, inculcates charity, forbids to kill, to steal, or to injure others. Attend to the consequence : that people, fierce originally, have become humane and compassionate. In a sacred book of the ancient Persians, it is written, “ If you incline to be a saint, give good education to your children ; for their virtuous actions will be imputed to you.” The people of Japan pay great respect to their parents ; it being an article in their creed, That those who fail
in

in duty to their parents, will be punished by the gods. In these two instances, religion tends greatly to connect parents and children in the most intimate tie of cordial affection. The reverence the Chinese have for their ancestors, and the ceremonies performed annually at their tombs, tend to keep them at home, and prevent their wandering into foreign countries.

Superstitious rites in some religions, are successfully employed to enforce certain moral duties. The Romans commonly made their solemn covenants in the capitol, before the statue of Jupiter; by which solemnity he was understood to guarantee the covenant, ready to pour out vengeance upon the transgressor. The Burates, a people in Grand Tartary, have a custom, which is, to demand an oath upon a mountain, held to be sacred. They are firmly persuaded, that the person who swears a falsehood, will not come down alive. The Essenes, a Jewish sect, bound themselves by a solemn oath, to shun unlawful gain, to be faithful to their promises, not to lie, and never to harm any one. In Cochin-China, the souls of those who have been eminent for arts or arms, are worshipped. Their statues are placed in the temples; and the size of a statue is proportioned to the merit of the person represented. If that custom be executed with candour, there cannot be a nobler incitement to public spirit. The Egyptians did not reach the thought of honouring virtue after death; but they dishonoured vice, by prohibiting it from the Elysian fields.

The salutary influence of religion on morality, is not confined to pure religion, whether by its connection with morality in general, or by inculcating particular moral duties. There are many religious doctrines, doubtful or perhaps erroneous,
that

that contribute also to enforce morality. Some followers of Confucius ascribe immortality to the souls only of the just ; and believe that the souls of the wicked perish with their bodies. In the second chapter of the Sadder, it is written, that a man whose good works are more numerous than his sins, will go to paradise ; otherwise that he will be thrust into hell, there to remain for ever. It adds, that a bridge erected over the great abyss where hell is situated, leads from this earth to paradise ; that upon the bridge there stands an angel, who weighs in a balance the merits of the passengers ; that the passenger whose good works are found light in the balance, is thrown over the bridge into hell ; but that the passenger whose good works preponderate, proceeds in his journey to paradise, where there is a glorious city, gardens, rivers, and beautiful virgins, whose looks are a perpetual feast, but who must not be enjoyed. In the fourth chapter of the Sadder, good works are zealously recommended in the following parable. Zeradusht, or Zoroaster, being in company with God, saw a man in hell who wanted his right foot. “ Oh my Creator,” said Zoroaster, who is that man who wants the right foot ? God answered, He was the king of thirty-three cities, reigned many years, but never did any good, except once, when, seeing a sheep tyed where it could not reach its food, he with his right foot pushed the food to it ; upon which account, that foot was saved from hell.” In Japan, those of the Sinto religion believe, that the souls of good men are translated to a place of happiness, next to the habitation of their gods. But they admit no place of torment ; nor have they any notion of a devil, but what animates the fox, a very mischievous animal in that country. What then becomes of the souls
of

of ill men? Being denied entrance into heaven, they wander about to expiate their sins. Those of the Bubsdo religion believe, that in the other world, there is a place of misery as well as of happiness. Of the latter, there are different degrees, for different degrees of virtue; and yet, far from envying the happier lot of others, every inhabitant is perfectly satisfied with his own. There are also different degrees of misery; for justice requires, that every man be punished according to the nature and number of his sins. *Jemma O* is the severe judge of the wicked: their vices appear to him in all their horror, by means of a mirror, named *the mirror of knowledge*. When souls have expiated their sins, after suffering long in the prison of darkness, they are sent back into the world, to animate serpents, toads, and such vile animals as resembled them in their former existence. From these they pass into the bodies of more innocent animals; and at last are again suffered to enter human bodies; after the dissolution of which, they run the same course of happiness or misery as at first. The people of Benin, in Africa, believe a man's shadow to be a real being, that gives testimony after death for or against him; and that he accordingly is made happy or miserable in another world. A religious belief in ancient Greece, that the souls of those who are left above ground without rites, have no access to Elysium, tended to promote humanity; for those who are careful of the dead, will not be altogether indifferent about the living.

Immense are the blessings that men in society reap, from the union of pure religion with sound morality: but however immense, I boldly affirm, that they scarce counterbalance the manifold evils that society has suffered from impure religion,
indulging

indulging and even encouraging gross immoralities. A few of the most glaring instances shall be selected. The first I shall mention is, the holding religion to consist in the belief of points purely speculative, such as have no relation to good works. The natural effect of that doctrine is, to divorce religion from morality, in manifest contradiction to the will of God. What avails it, for example, to the glory of God, or to the happiness of mankind, whether the conception of the Virgin Mary was maculate or immaculate? The following few instances, taken out of a large heap, are controversies of that kind, which miserably afflicted the Christian church for ages, and engendered the bitterest enmity, raging with destruction and slaughter among brethren of the same religion. In the fifth century, it was the employment of more than one general council, to determine, whether *the mother of God*, or *the mother of Christ*, is the proper epithet of the Virgin Mary. In the sixth century, a bitter controversy arose, whether Christ's body was corruptible. In the seventh century, Christians were divided about the volition of Christ, whether he had one or two Wills, and how his Will operated. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Greek and Latin churches divided about the Holy Ghost, whether he proceeded from the Father and Son, or only from the Father. In the eleventh century, there arose a warm contest between the Greek and Latin churches, about using unleavened bread in the eucharist. In the fourteenth century, it was controverted between Pope John XXII. and the divines of his time, whether souls in their intermediate state see God, or only the human nature of Christ. Franciscans have suffered death in multitudes about the form of their hood. It was disputed between the Dominicans and Franciscans, whether

whether Christ had any property. The Pope pronounced the negative proposition to be a pestilential and blasphemous doctrine, subversive of Catholic faith. Many councils were held at Constantinople, to determine what sort of light it was that the disciples saw on Mount Tabor: it was solemnly pronounced, to be the eternal light with which God is encircled; and which may be termed his energy or operation, but is distinct from his nature and essence. A heap of propositions in the creed of St Athanasius, as far as intelligible, are merely speculative, such as may be adopted or rejected, without the least danger to religion, or to morality; and yet we are commanded to believe every one of them, under the pain of eternal damnation. An endless number of such propositions, adopted by the Romish church, clearly evince, that Christianity was in that church held to consist entirely in belief, without any regard to good works*. Whether the Alcoran was eternal, or whether it was created, is a dispute that has occasioned much effusion of Mahometan blood. The Calif Mamoun, with many doctors, held it to have been created; but the greater number insisted, that being the word of God, it must like him be eternal. This opinion is embraced by the present Mahometants, who hold all who deny it to be infidels. There is among men great uniformity of opinion in matters of importance. Religious differences are generally about trifles, where liberty ought to be indulged with-

* The great weight that was laid upon orthodoxy, appears from a triumphal arch erected over the tomb of Charlemagne, upon which was the following inscription: "Here lies the body of Charles, a great and orthodox emperor."

out reserve (a); and yet upon these trifles, are founded the bitterest enmities. It ought therefore to be a fundamental law in every church, to abstain from loading its creed with articles that are not essential; for such articles tend to eradicate brotherly love, and to convert into bitter enemies, men who are fundamentally of the same faith.

In the next place shall be mentioned, certain articles of faith that tend to sap the very foundation of one or other moral duty. What, for example, can more effectually promote cruelty, than the creed of the Idaans, a people in the island of Borneo, That every person they put to death must attend them as a slave in the other world? This belief makes them prone to war, and occasions assassinations without end. According to the creed of the savages in Canada, the killing and burning enemies are what chiefly entitle them to be happy in another world, and that he who destroys the greatest number, will be the most happy. At the same time, they have no notion of greater happiness there, than plenty of game, great abundance of all things without labour, and full gratification of every sensual appetite. The Scandinavians had no notion of greater bliss in another world, than to drink beer out of the skull of an enemy, in the hall of Woden, their tutelar deity; can hatred and revenge in this world be more honourably rewarded? The doctrine of tutelar deities is equally productive of hatred and revenge: relying on a superior power who espouses all my quarrels, I put no bounds to my resentment, and every moral duty in opposition is trampled under foot. The

(a) Elements of Criticism, vol. 2. p. 493. edit. 5.

following creed of the inhabitants of the Marian or Ladrone islands, is a great encouragement to cowardice. Heaven, according to that creed, is a region under the earth, filled with cocoa-trees, sugar-canes, and variety of other delicious fruits. Hell is a vast furnace, constantly red hot. Their condition in the other world depends not on good or bad actions, but on the manner of their death. Those who die a natural death, go straight to heaven : they may sin freely, if they can but secure their persons against violence. But war and bloodshed are their aversion, because those who suffer a violent death go straight to hell. In many ancient nations, a goddess was worshipped, whose province it was to promote animal love without regard to matrimony. That goddess was in Greece termed *Aphrodité*, in Rome *Venus*, and in Babylon *Militta*. To her was sacrificed, in some countries, the virginity of young women ; which, it was believed, did secure their chastity for ever after. Justin mentions a custom in the island of Cyprus, of sending young women at stated times to the sea-shore ; where they prostituted themselves as a tribute to Venus, that they might be chaste the rest of their lives. His words are, “ Pro reliqua pudicitiae libamenta “ Veneri soluturas (a). In other nations, a small number only were prostituted, in order to secure to the remainder, a chaste and regular life. This explains a custom among the Babylonians, which, far from being thought a religious act, is held as a proof of abandoned debauchery. The custom was, That every woman once in her life, should prostitute herself in the temple of the goddess Mylitta. Herodotus reports, that there-

(a) Lib. 18. cap. 5.

by they became proof against all temptation. And Ælian observes the same of the Lydian ladies. *Credat Judæus Apella.* Margaret Poretta, who in the fourteenth century made a figure among the Beguines, preached a doctrine not a little favourable to incontinence. She undertook to demonstrate, “ That the soul, when absorbed
 “ in the love of God, is free from the restraint
 “ of law, and may freely gratify every natural
 “ appetite, without contracting guilt ;” a cordial doctrine for a lady of pleasure. That crazy person, instead of being laughed at, was burnt alive at Paris. In the fifteenth century, a sect termed *brethren and sisters of the free spirit*, held, That modesty is a mark of inhering corruption ; and that those only are perfect, who can behold nakedness without emotion. These fanatics appeared at public worship, without the least covering. Many tenets professed by the Jesuits, open a door to every immorality. “ Persons
 “ truly wicked, and void of the love of God,
 “ may expect eternal life in heaven ; provided
 “ only they be impressed with fear of divine anger, and avoid heinous crimes through the
 “ dread of future punishment.” Again, “ Persons may transgress with safety, who have a
 “ probable reason for transgressing, such as any
 “ plausible argument. A judge, for example,
 “ may decide for the least probable side of a
 “ question, and even against his own opinion,
 “ provided he be supported by any tolerable authority.” Again, “ Actions intrinsically evil,
 “ and contrary to divine law, may however be
 “ innocently performed, by those who can join,
 “ even ideally, a good end to the performance.
 “ For example, an ecclesiastic may safely commit simony, by purchasing a benefice, if to
 “ the unlawful act, he join the innocent purpose
 “ of

“ of procuring to himself a subsistence. A man
 “ who runs another through the body for a slight
 “ affront, renders the action lawful, if his mo-
 “ tive be honour, not revenge.” A famous Je-
 suit taught, that a young man may wish the death
 of his father, and even rejoice at his death, pro-
 vided the wish proceed, not from hatred, but
 from fondness of his father’s estate. And ano-
 ther Jesuit has had the effrontery to maintain,
 that a monk may lawfully assassinate a calumnia-
 tor, who threatens to charge his order with scan-
 dalous practices.

A doctrine that strikes at the root of every
 moral duty, as well as of religion itself, is, That
 God will accept of a composition for sin ; a doc-
 trine that prevailed universally during the days of
 ignorance. Compositions for crimes were coun-
 tenanced by law in every country (*a*) ; and men,
 prone to indulge their passions, flattered them-
 selves, that they might compound with God for
 sinning against him, as with their neighbours for
 injuring them. Those who have no notion of
 any motive but interest, naturally think it to be
 equally powerful with the Deity. An opinion
 prevailed universally in the Christian church,
 from the eighth century down to the Reforma-
 tion, that liberal donations to God, to a saint,
 to the church, would procure pardon even for
 the grossest sins. During that period, the build-
 ing churches and monasteries was in high vogue.
 This absurd or rather impious doctrine, proved
 a plentiful harvest of wealth to the clergy ; for
 the great and opulent, who are commonly the
 boldest sinners, have the greatest ability to com-
 pound for their sins. There needs nothing but
 such an opinion, to annihilate every duty, whe-

(*a*) Historical law tracts, tract 1.

ther moral or religious; for what wicked man will think either of restitution or of reformation, who can purchase a pardon from Heaven with so little trouble? Louis XI. of France was remarkably superstitious, even in a superstitious age. To ingratiate himself with the Virgin Mary, he surrendered to her the county of Boulogne with great solemnity. Voltaire remarks, that godliness consists, not in making the Virgin a Countess, but in abstaining from sin. Composition for sins is a doctrine of the church of Rome, boldly professed without disguise. A book of rates, published by authority of the Pope, contains stated prices for absolutions, not excepting the most heinous sins that men are capable to commit. So true is the observation of Æneas Silvius, afterward Pope Paul II. “Nihil est quod absque
 “argento Romana curia det: ipsa manuum im-
 “positio, et Spiritus Sancti dona, venduntur;
 “nec peccatorum venia nisi nummatis impen-
 “ditur*.” Of all the immoral atonements for sin, human sacrifices are the most brutal; deviating no less from the purity of religion, than from the fundamental principles of morality. They wore out of use as kindly affections prevailed; and will never again be restored, unless we fall back to the savage manners of our forefathers. Composition for crimes, once universal, is now banished from every enlightened nation. Composition for sins, was once equally universal; and I wish it could be said, that there are

* “There is nothing to be obtained from the
 “court of Rome, but by the force of money: even
 “the ceremony of consecration, and the gifts of the
 “Holy Ghost, are sold; and the remission of sins is
 “bestowed only on those who can pay for it.”

now no remains of that poisonous opinion among Christians : the practice of the church of Rome will not permit it to be said. Were men deeply convinced, as they ought to be, that sincere repentance and reformation of manners are the only means for obtaining pardon, they would never dream of making bargains with the Almighty, and of compounding with him for their sins.

In the practice of religion, the laying too great weight on forms, ceremonies, and other external arbitrary acts, has an unhappy tendency on morality. That error has infected every religion. The Sadder, the Bible of the Gaures, prohibits calumny and detraction, lying, stealing, adultery, and fornication. It however enervates morality and religion, by placing many trifling acts on a level with the most important duties. It enjoins the destruction of five kinds of reptiles, frogs, mice, ants, serpents, and flies that sting. It teaches, that to walk barefoot profanes the ground. Great regard for water is enjoined : it must not be used during the night ; and when set upon the fire, a third part of the pot must be empty, to prevent boiling over. The brahmins have wofully degenerated from their original institutions, thinking at present, that religion consists in forms and ceremonies. As soon as an infant is born, the word *Oum* must be pronounced over it ; otherwise it will be eternally miserable : its tongue must be rubbed with consecrated meal : the third day of the moon, it must be carried into open air, with its head to the north. The inhabitants of Formosa believe in hell ; but it is only for punishing those who fail to go naked in certain seasons, or who wear cotton instead of silk. In the time of Ghenhizcan, it was held in Tartary a mortal sin, to put a knife into the fire, to whip a horse with his bridle, or to break one bone

bone with another ; and yet these pious Tartars held treachery, robbery, murder, to be no sins. A faction in Ægina, a Greek commonwealth, treacherously assassinated seven hundred of their fellow-citizens. They cut off the hands of a miserable fugitive, who had laid hold of the altar for protection, in order to murder him without the precincts of the temple. Their treacherous assassinations made no impression : but though they refrained from murder in the temple, yet by profaning it with blood, says Herodotus, they offended the gods, and contracted inexpiable guilt. Would one believe, that a tribunal was established by Charlemagne more horrible than the inquisition itself ? It was established in Westphalia, to punish with death every Saxon who eat meat in lent. The same law was established in Flanders and in French-county, the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Listen to a celebrated writer upon that poisonous conceit. “ It is certain, that in every religion, however sublime, many of the votaries, “ perhaps the greatest number, will still seek “ the divine favour, not by virtue and good morals, which alone can be acceptable to a perfect being, but either by frivolous observances, by intemperate zeal, by rapturous ecstasies, or by the belief of mysterious and absurd opinions. When the old Romans were “ attacked with a pestilence, they never ascribed their sufferings to their vices, or dreamed “ of repentance and amendment. They never “ thought that they were the general robbers of “ the world, whose ambition and avarice made “ desolate the earth, and reduced opulent nations to want and beggary. They only created “ a dictator in order to drive a nail into a door ; “ and by that means they thought that they had “ sufficiently

“ sufficiently appeased their incensed deity (a).” Thus, gradually, the essentials of religion wear out of mind, by the attention given to forms and ceremonies: these intercept and exhaust the whole stock of devotion, which ought to be reserved for the higher exercises of religion. The neglect or transgression of mere punctilios, are punished as heinous sins; while sins really heinous are suffered to pass with impunity. The Jews exalted the keeping their sabbath holy, above every other duty; and it was the general belief, that the strict observance of that day was alone sufficient to atone for every sin. The command of resting that day, was taken so literally, that they would not on that day defend themselves even against an assassin. Ptolomy, son of Lagus, entered Jerusalem on the Jewish sabbath, in a hostile manner without resistance. Nor did experience open the eyes of that foolish people. Xiphilin, relating the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey, says, that if the Jews had not rested on the sabbath, Pompey would not have been successful. Every Saturday he renewed his batteries: and having on that day made a breach, he marched into the town without opposition. One cannot help smiling at an Amsterdam Jew, who had no check of conscience, for breaking open a house, and carrying off money; and yet being stopped in his flight by the sabbath before he got out of the territory, he most piously rested, till he was apprehended, and led to the gallows. Nor are the Jews to this day cured of that frenzy. In some late accounts from Constantinople, a fire broke out in a Jew’s house on Satur-

(a) Natural History of Religion, by David Hume, Esquire.

day : rather than profane the sabbath, he suffered the flames to spread, which occasioned the destruction of five hundred houses *. We laugh at the Jews, and we have reason ; and yet there are many well-meaning Protestants, who lay the whole of religion upon punctual attendance at public worship. Are the Roman Catholics less superstitious with respect to the place of worship, than the Jews are with respect to the day of worship ? In the year 1670, some Arabians, watching an opportunity, got into the town of Dieu when the gates were opened in the morning. They might easily have been expelled by the cannon of the citadel ; but the Portuguese governor was obliged to look on without firing a gun, being threatened with excommunication, if the least mischief should be done to any of the churches. The only doctrines inculcated from the Romish pulpit down to the Reformation, were the authority of holy mother church ; the merit of the saints, and their credit in the court of heaven ; the dignity, glory, and love of the blessed Virgin ; the efficacy of relics ; the intolerable fire of purgatory ; and the vast importance of

* “ And there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together. And Jesus laid his hands on her : and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue with indignation said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work : in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. The Lord then said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering ? and ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day ?” *Luke, xiii. 11.*

indulgences.

indulgences. Relying on such pious acts for obtaining remission of sins, all orders of men rushed headlong into vice † ; nor was there a single attempt to stem the current of immorality ; for the traffic of indulgences could not but flourish in proportion to the growth of sin. And thus was religion set in direct opposition to morality. St Eloy, bishop of Noyon in the seventh century, and canonized by the church of Rome, delivers the following doctrine. “ He is a good Christian who goes frequently to church ; who presents his oblations upon the altar ; who tastes not the fruit of his own industry till part be consecrated to God ; who, when the holy festivals approach, lives chastely even with his own wife for several days ; and who can repeat the creed and the Lord’s prayer. Redeem then your souls from destruction, while you have the means in your power : offer presents and tithes to churchmen : come more frequently to church : humbly implore the patronage of saints. If you observe these things, you may, in the day of judgment, go with confidence to the tribunal of the eternal Judge, and say, Give to us, O Lord, for we have given unto thee.” A modern author subjoins a proper observation. “ We see here a very ample description of a good Christian, in which there is not the least mention of the love

† An ingenious writer pleasantly observes, “ That a croisade was the South-sea project of former times : by the latter, men hoped to gain riches without industry : by the former, they hoped to gain heaven without repentance. amendment of life, or sanctity of manners.” *Sir David Dalrymple, a judge in the court of session.*

“ of God, resignation to his will, obedience to
 “ his laws, nor of justice, benevolence, nor
 “ charity.” Gross ignorance and wretched superstition prevailed so much even in the fourteenth century, that people reckoned themselves secure of salvation, if at the day of judgment they could show any connection with monks. Many at the point of death, made it their last request, to be admitted into the mendicant order, or to be interred in their burial-place. Religion need not associate with morality, if such silly practices be sufficient for obtaining the favour of God. Is this less absurd than the Hindostan belief, That the water of the Ganges hath a sanctifying virtue; and that those who die on its banks, are not only exempted from future punishment, but are wafted straight to paradise ?

Forms and ceremonies are visible acts, which make a deep impression on the vulgar. Hence their influence in reasoning and in morality, as we have seen in the two sketches immediately foregoing; and hence also their influence in religion. Forms and ceremonies are useful at public worship; but they ought not to take place of essentials. People however, governed by what they see and hear, are more addicted to external acts of devotion, than to heart-worship, which is not known but by reflection.

It will be no excuse for relying so much on forms and ceremonies, that they are innocent. In themselves they may be innocent; but not so in their consequences. For they have by such reliance a violent tendency to relax the obligations of morality. Religious rites that contradict not any passion, are keenly embraced, and punctually performed; and men, flattering themselves that they have thus been punctual in their duty to God, give vent to their passions against men. “ They
 “ pay

“ pay tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin ;
 “ but omit the weightier matters of the law,
 “ judgment, mercy, and faith (a).” Upon such
 a man religion sits extremely light. As he sel-
 dom exercises any act of genuine devotion, he
 thinks of the Deity with ease and familiarity : how
 otherwise is it accountable, that the plays, term-
 ed *Mysteries*, could be relished, where mean and
 perhaps dissolute persons are brought on the
 stage, acting Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and
 even God himself ? These divine persons were
 certainly not more regarded, than the Grecian
 gods, who frequently made part of the *Dramatis*
personæ in Greek plays. Many other facts might
 be urged, to prove the low ebb of religion in those
 days : I select one or two, which probably will af-
 ford some amusement to the reader. Bartolus,
 the famous lawyer, in order to shew the form of
 proceeding in a court of justice, imagines a pro-
 cess between the devil and mankind. The devil
 cites mankind to appear at the tribunal of Jesus
 Christ, claiming them as belonging to him by
 Adam’s fall. He swells in rage, demanding whe-
 ther any one dares appear in their behalf.
 Against the Virgin Mary, offering herself as their
 advocate, the devil makes two objections ; first,
 That being the mother of the Judge, her influ-
 ence would be too great ; second, That a woman
 is debarred from being an advocate : and these ob-
 jections are supported by numberless quotations
 from the *Corpus Juris*. The Virgin, on her part,
 quotes texts permitting women to appear for wi-
 dows, orphans, and for persons in distress. She is
 allowed to plead for mankind, as coming under
 the last article. The devil urges prescription, as

(a) Matthew, xxiii. 23.

having been in possession of mankind ever since the fall. The Virgin answers, That a *mala-fide possessor* cannot acquire by prescription. Prescription being repelled, the parties go to the merits of the cause, which are learnedly discussed with texts from the Pandeets. The memoirs of the French academy of Belles Letters (*a*) have the following story. A monk returning from a house which he durst not visit in day-light, had a river to cross. The boat was overturned by Satan, and the monk was drowned when he was beginning to invoke the Virgin Mary. Two devils having laid hold of his soul, were stopped by two angels. “My Lords,” said the devils, “true it is, and not a fable, that God died for his friends; but this monk was an enemy to God, and we are carrying him to hell.” After much altercation, it was proposed by the angels, to refer the dispute to the Virgin Mary. The devils were willing to accept of God for judge, because he would judge according to law. “But from the Virgin Mary,” said they, “we expect no justice: she would break to atoms every gate of hell, rather than suffer one to remain there a moment who pays any worship to her image. She may say, that black is white, and that puddled water is pure.—God never contradicts her. The day on which God made his mother, was a fatal day to us.”

People who profess the same religion, and differ only in forms and ceremonies, may justly be compared to neighbouring states, who are commonly bitter enemies to each other, if they have any difference. At the same time, dissocial passions never rage so furiously, as under the mask of

(*a*) Vol. 18.

religion ; for in that case they are held to be meritorious, as exerted in the cause of God. This observation is but too well verified in the disputes among Christians. However low religion was in the dark ages, yet men fought for forms and ceremonies as *pro aris et focis*. In the Armenian form of baptism, the priest says at the first immersion, *In name of the Father* ; at the second, *In name of the Son* ; at the third, *In name of the Holy Ghost*. This form is bitterly condemned by the Romish church, which appoints the three persons of the Trinity to be joined in the same expression, in token of their union. Strahlenberg gives an account of a Christian sect in Russia, which differs from the established Greek church in the following particulars. First, In public worship they repeat *Halleluia* but twice ; and it is a mortal sin to repeat it thrice. Second, In celebrating mass, not five but seven loaves ought to be used. Third, The cross stamped upon a mass-loaf ought to have eight corners. Fourth, In signing with the cross at prayers, the end of the ring-finger must be joined to the end of the thumb, and the two intermediate fingers be held out at full length. How trifling are these differences ! and yet for such differences, all who dissent from them are held unclean, and no better than Pagans : they will not eat nor drink with any of the established church ; and if a person of that church happen to sit down in a house of theirs, they wash and purify the seat *. There are few sects founded

M 4

upon

* Christians, occupied too much with external forms, have corrupted several of the fine arts. They have injured architecture, by erecting magnificent churches in the ugly form of a cross. And they have injured painting, by withdrawing the best hands from proper

upon more triiual differences than the Turkish and Persian Mahometans. The epithets given to the Persians by the Turks are, " Forsaken of God, " Abominable, Blasphemers of the Holy Prophet ;" and so bitter is their enmity to the Persians, that the schools of the seraglio are open to young men of all nations, those of Persia alone excepted. The Persians are held to be such apostates from the true faith, as to be utterly past recovery : they receive no quarter in war, being accounted unworthy of life or slavery. Nor do the Persians yield to the Turks in hatred. Whether coffee be or be not prohibited in the Alcoran, has produced much controversy in the Mahometan church, and consequently much persecuting zeal. A musti, not fond of coffee, declared it, like wine, to have an inebriating quality, and therefore was virtually prohibited by Mahomet. Another musti, fond of coffee for its exhilarating virtue, declared it lawful ; " because," said he, " all things are lawful that are not expressly prohibited in the Alcoran." The coffee-houses in Constantinople, were for a long period alternately opened and shut, according to the taste of the reigning musti ; till coffee at last, surmounting all obstacles, came to be an established Mahometan liquor. Religion thus runs wild, whenever it loses sight of its true ends, that of worshipping God, and that of being just to man. The Hindows hate the Mahometans for eating the flesh of cows : the Mahometans hate the Hindows for eating the flesh of swine. The aversion that men of the same religion have at each other for the most

proper subjects, and employing them on the legendary martyrdom of pretended saints, and other such disagreeable stories.

trivial

trivial differences, converts them frequently into brutal savages. Suppose, for example, that a poor man, reduced to the extremity of hunger, makes a greedy meal of a dead horse, a case so deplorable would wring every heart. And yet, let this be done in Lent, or on a meagre day—Behold! every zealot is instantly metamorphosed into a devil incarnate. In the records of St. Claude, a small district of Burgundy, is engrossed a sentence against a poor gentleman named *Claude Guillon*. The words are, “ Having considered
 “ the process, and taken advice of the doctors of
 “ law, we declare the said Claude Guillon duly
 “ convicted for having carried away and boiled a
 “ piece of a dead horse, and of having eat the
 “ same on the 31st March, being Saturday.” And he was beheaded accordingly 28th July 1629; notwithstanding a defence above all expectation, That he committed that irregularity to preserve his life. How was it possible for the monsters to persuade themselves, that this sentence was agreeable to God, who is goodness itself!

No less prejudicial to morality, than the relying too much on forms and ceremonies, is the treating some sins with great severity; neglecting others equally heinous, or perhaps more so. In a book of rates for absolution, mentioned above, no just distinction is made among sins; some venial sins being taxed at a higher rate than many of the deepest dye. For example, the killing father, mother, brother, sister, or wife, is taxed at five gros; and the same for incest with a mother or sister. The lying with a woman in the church is taxed at six gros; and at the same time, absolution for usury is taxed at seven gros, and for simony at no less than sixteen gros*.

* A gros is the third part of a ducat.

A maxim adopted by many pious persons, has a smiling appearance, but in its consequences is hurtful both to religion and morality; which is, That to testify our veneration for the Deity, and zeal for his service, the performing public and private worship, and the fulfilling moral duties, are not alone sufficient; that over and above we are bound to fast, to do penance, to honour the priesthood, and to punish the enemies of God, *i. e.* those who differ from us in principles or practice. This maxim, which may be termed *the doctrine of supererogation*, is finely illustrated by an author mentioned above. “ The duties
 “ which a man performs as a friend or parent,
 “ seem merely owing to his benefactor or chil-
 “ dren; nor can he be wanting to these duties
 “ without breaking through all the ties of nature
 “ and morality. A strong inclination may prompt
 “ him to the performance: a sentiment of or-
 “ der and moral beauty joins its force to these
 “ natural ties: and the whole man is drawn to
 “ his duty without any effort or endeavour.
 “ Even with regard to the virtues which are
 “ more austere, and more founded on reflecti-
 “ on, such as public spirit, filial duty, tempe-
 “ rance, or integrity: the moral obligation,
 “ in our apprehension, removes all pretence to
 “ religious merit: and the virtuous conduct is
 “ esteemed no more than what we owe to socie-
 “ ty, and to ourselves. In all this, a supersti-
 “ tious man finds nothing which he has properly
 “ performed for the sake of his Deity, or which
 “ can peculiarly recommend him to the divine
 “ favour and protection. He considers not,
 “ that the most genuine method of serving the
 “ Divinity is by promoting the happiness of his
 “ creatures. He still looks out for some more
 “ immediate service of the supreme Being: and
 “ any

“ any practice recommended to him, which ei-
 “ ther serves to no purpose in life, or offers the
 “ strongest violence to his natural inclinations ;
 “ that practice he will the more readily em-
 “ brace, on account of those very circumstan-
 “ ces, which should make him absolutely reject
 “ it. It seems the more purely religious, that
 “ it proceeds from no mixture of any other mo-
 “ tive or consideration. And if for its sake he
 “ sacrifices much of his ease and quiet, his claim
 “ of merit appears still to rise upon him, in
 “ proportion to the zeal and devotion which he
 “ discovers. In restoring a loan, or paying a
 “ debt, his divinity is no wise beholden to him ;
 “ because these acts of justice are what he was
 “ bound to perform, and what many would
 “ have performed, were there no God in the
 “ universe. But if he fast a day, or give him-
 “ self a sound whipping, this has a direct refe-
 “ rence, in his opinion, to the service of God.
 “ No other motive could engage him to such au-
 “ sterities. By these distinguished marks of de-
 “ votion, he has now acquired the divine fa-
 “ vour ; and may expect in recompence, pro-
 “ tection and safety in this world, and eternal
 “ happiness in the next (a).” My yoke is easy,
 faith our Saviour, and my burden is light. So
 they really are. Every essential of religion is
 founded on our nature, and to a pure heart is
 pleasant in the performance : what can be more
 pleasant, than gratitude to our Maker, and obedi-
 ence to his will in comforting our fellow-crea-
 tures ? But enthusiasts are not easily persuaded,
 that to make ourselves happy in the exercises of
 piety and benevolence, is the most acceptable ser-
 vice to God that we can perform. In loading re-

(a) Natural History of Religion.

ligion

ligion with unnecessary articles of faith and practice, they contradict our Saviour, by making his yoke severe, and his burden heavy *. Law, upon Christian perfection, enjoins such unnatural austerity of manners, as to be subversive both of religion and morality : loose education is not more so. Our passions, when denied their proper exercise, are apt to break their fetters, and to plunge us into every extravagance : like the body, which squeezed in one part, swells the more in another. In the same way of thinking, the pious Jeremy Taylor, treating of mortification, prescribes it as the indispensable duty of a Christian, to give no indulgence even to the most innocent emotions ; because, says he, the most indifferent action becomes sinful, when there is no other motive for the performance but barely its being pleasant. Could a malevolent deity contrive any thing more severe against his votaries ?

In the same spirit of supererogation, holidays have been multiplied without end, depriving the working poor of time, that would be more usefully employed in providing bread for themselves and families. Such a number of holidays, beside contradicting Providence, which framed us more for action than contemplation, have several poisonous effects with respect to morality. The moral sense has great influence on the industrious, who have no time for indulging their irregular appetites ; the idle, on the contrary, are obvious to every temptation. Men likewise are apt to assume great merit from a rigid observance of

* An old woman walking with others to a sacrament, was observed to pick out the worst bits of the road : " I never can do enough," said she, " for sweet Jesus."

holidays and other ceremonies ; and having thus acquired, in their opinion, the favour of God, they rely on his indulgence in other matters which they think too sweet for sinners.

Monastic institutions are an improvement upon holidays : the whole life of a monk is intended to be a holiday, dedicated entirely to the service of God. The idleness of the monastic state among Christians, opens a wide door to immorality.

In the third section, penances are handled as a mode of worship, for obtaining pardon of sin. But they are sometimes submitted to by the innocent, in order to procure from the Almighty still more favour than innocence alone is intitled to ; in which view they are evidently a work of supererogation. They seem to have no bad effect with respect to religion, as distinguished from morality : the body is indeed cruciated unnecessarily ; but if enthusiasts voluntarily submit to bodily distresses, they have themselves only to blame. With respect to morality, their bad tendency is not slight. Those who perform extraordinary acts of devotion, conceive themselves peculiarly entitled to the favour of God. Proud of his favour, they attach themselves to him alone, and turn indifferent about every other duty. The favourite of a terrestrial potentate, assumes authority ; and takes liberties that private persons dare not venture upon : shall a favourite of Heaven be less indulged ? The Faquirs in Hindostan submit to dreadful penances ; and, holding themselves secure of God's favour, they are altogether indifferent about the duty they owe to their neighbour. So much are they above common decency, as to go about naked, not even concealing what modesty forbids us to expose. The penances enjoined in the Romish church,

church, such as fasting and flagellation, have evidently the same bad tendency *. With respect to fasting in particular, to what good purpose it can serve, except to gluttons, is not readily conceived. Temperance in eating and drinking is essential to health : too much or too little are equally noxious, though their effects are different. Fasting therefore ought never to be enjoined to the temperate as a religious duty, because it cannot be acceptable to a benevolent Deity. Listen to a great prophet on that subject. “ Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, “ and to smite with the fist of wickedness ; ye “ shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your “ voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast “ that I have chosen ? a day for a man to afflict “ his soul ? Is it to bow down his head as a “ bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him ? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an “ acceptable day to the Lord ? Is not this the “ fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of “ wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and “ to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break “ every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to “ the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that “ are cast out, to thy house ? when thou seest “ the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou “ hide not thyself from thine own flesh (a) ? ”

* A sect of Christians, styled *Flagellantes*, held, that flagellation is of equal virtue with baptism and the other sacraments ; that it will procure forgiveness of sin ; that the old law of Christ is to be abolished, and a new law substituted ; enjoining the baptism of blood to be administered by whipping.

(a) Isaiah, lviii. 4. &c.

The most extraordinary penance of all, is celibacy, considered as a religious duty. Many fathers of the church declare against matrimony. St. Jerom in particular says, That the end of matrimony is eternal death; that the earth indeed is filled by it, but heaven by virginity. The intemperate zeal of many primitive Christians led them to abstain from matrimony, and even from conjugal caresses, if they had the misfortune to be married; believing that the carnal appetite is inconsistent with pure religion. Edward the confessor was fainted, for no better reason than the abstaining from matrimonial duties. Jovinian, in the fourth century, taught, that all who observe the laws of piety and virtue laid down in the gospel, have an equal title to happiness in another life: consequently, that those who pass their days in celibacy and mortification, are in no respect more acceptable to God than those who live virtuously in marriage without mortification. He published his opinions in a book, against which Jerom wrote a bitter and abusive treatise, still extant. These opinions were condemned by the church, and by St. Ambrose, in a council at Milan; and Jovinian was banished by the Emperor Honorius. Such ridiculous self-denial was not confined to Christians. Strabo mentions a sect among the Thracians, who made a vow of perpetual virginity; and were much respected on that account. Garcilasso mentions virgins in Peru consecrated to the sun: a vestal guilty of frailty was buried alive, her lover hanged, and the inhabitants of the town where she lived put to the sword. Among all the absurd acts of mortification, the present affords the strongest instance of superstition triumphing over common sense; for what can be more inconsistent with common sense, not to talk
of

of religion, than an endeavour to put an end to the human species? Some glimpses of reason have abated the zeal of enthusiasts for celibacy; but have not totally extirpated it, for celibacy of the clergy remains to this day a law in the Romish church. It cannot however seriously be thought the will of our benevolent God, that his priests should be denied the exercise of natural powers, bestowed on all for a most valuable purpose. This impious restraint, which contradicts the great law of *Increase and multiply*, has opened the door to gross debauchery in the pastors of the Romish church, though ecclesiastics ought of all men to be the most circumspect in their conduct. Men restrained from what is necessary and proper, are more prone than others to break out into gross irregularities*. Marriage is warmly recommended in the laws of Zoroaster. Children are said to be a bridge that conducts men to heaven; and a man who has no children, is held to be under the power of Ahriman. The prayer of a priest who has no children, is held disagreeable to Ormusd.

The celibacy of the clergy was countenanced by the Pope; and enforced from a political con-

* An ingenious writer, mentioned above, makes the following observation. "The celibacy of ecclesiastics was originally introduced by some superstitious refinements on the law of God and nature. Could men have been kept alive without eating or drinking, as well as without marriage, the same refinements would have prohibited ecclesiastics from eating and drinking, and thereby have elevated them so much nearer to the state of angels. In process of time, this fanatical interdiction became an instrument of worldly wisdom: and thus, as frequently happens, what weak men began, politicians completed." *Sir David Dalrymple.*

sider-

sideration, That it united the whole clergy into one firm body under his spiritual Majesty. How short-sighted is man? It was justly esteemed at the time to be the corner-stone of Papal power; and yet became the chief cause of its downfall. Celibacy precipitated the Romish clergy into adultery, fornication, cunning, dissimulation, and every secret vice. Will men of such manners be listened to, when they preach purity to their hearers? There was no medium, but either to reform their own manners, or to give every indulgence to the laity. But the ignorance and superstition of the latter, rendered the former secure in their own opinion. The restoration of learning broke the charm. Men beginning to think for themselves, were provoked at the dissolute lives of their pastors, and raised a loud cry against them, not yet thinking of their doctrines. Reformers were burnt as heretics; and clergymen were held to be emissaries from Satan, to establish his throne upon earth. Knox, that violent reformer, believed seriously, that Cardinal Beaton was a *conjured enemy to Christ Jesus*. Providence brings good out of ill. Had not the clergy been dissolute, poor Christians might have laboured under ignorance and ecclesiastical thraldom to this hour. Our reformers, beginning with their pastors, extended insensibly their hatred to the doctrines taught by their pastors. Every article of faith was sifted: the chaff was separated from the corn; and a reformation was established upon the scriptures, rejecting every innovation of the Romish church.

There is not mentioned in history a more impudent attack upon moral principles, than a privilege assumed by the Bishop of Rome, to disengage men from their oaths and promises: it is not a greater stretch

stretch to disengage them from every duty, whether of morality or of religion. The barons of Valentia, dreading a persecution against the industrious Moors, their tenants, obtained the following clause to be in their king's coronation-oath: "That he should not expel the Moriscos, nor force them to be baptized; that he should never desire to be relieved from the oath by a dispensation from the Pope, nor accept a dispensation if offered." The Emperor Charles V. took this oath solemnly in presence of his nobles; and yet accepted a dispensation from the Pope, absolving him from the oath, and from the guilt of perjury in breaking it. Augustus King of Poland, in the treaty of Altramstadt, renounced the kingdom of Poland to his competitor Stanislaus. The defeat of the King of Sweden at Poltowa, was an inviting opportunity to renew his pretensions. A solemn treaty stood in his way; but the Pope removed that obstacle, by annulling the treaty, and setting him at liberty. The Pope has been known even to bestow that wonderful privilege upon others. Pope Pascal II. having with a solemn oath renounced the right of investitures, empowered the cardinals to declare his oath null. Bishops also, imitating their superior, have assumed the privilege of dispensing with moral duties. Instances are not rare, of curates being authorized by their bishop to entertain concubines, paying for each a regular tax of a crown yearly. Nay, in some provincial synods, they are enjoined to keep concubines, in order to prevent scandal. Common prostitutes, licensed in the city of Leghorn, have a church peculiar to themselves, and must not enter into any other. They follow their trade with the utmost freedom; except in passion-week, during which they must forbear sinning, under pain of banishment.

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The power of bestowing kingdoms, assumed by the bishop of Rome, was an encroachment on the rules of justice, no less bold. Christian princes, not many ages ago, esteemed the Pope's gift to be their best title of property. In the year 1346, the Venetians requested the Pope's permission to carry on commerce in Asia, and to purchase there pepper and cinnamon. The Pope not only granted their request, but pronounced anathemas upon any who should dare to interfere in that commerce. Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, applied to Pope Alexander VI. to vest in them the property of America, discovered under their auspices by Columbus. The Pope having formerly made a grant to the kings of Portugal, of their discoveries in the East Indies, both grants were held sacred; and it came to be strenuously disputed, under which of the grants the Molucca islands were comprehended. Both grants proceed upon a narrative, of the power bestowed by Almighty God on the Pope as successor to St Peter and vicar of Christ. To imagine, that the Almighty would bestow such powers on the Bishop of Rome, or on any human being, shews gross ignorance of the common rights of mankind, and of the government of Providence.

The grossest of all deviations, not only from sound morality but from pure religion, and the most extensive in its baneful effects, is a doctrine embraced by established churches, not many excepted, That because heretics are odious in the sight of God, it is the duty of the orthodox to extirpate them root and branch. Observe the consequence: people who differ from the established church, are held to be obstinate sinners, deserving punishment here as well as hereafter. The religion of every country is changeable; and the religion at present dominant may soon be under

under depression; which of course subjects all mankind to the rigour of persecution. An invention more effectual for extirpating the human race, is not within the reach of human powers: the horror of human sacrifices is as nothing in comparison.

The old Romans, far from having any notion of persecution, adopted the gods of every nation they conquered. A learned writer (*a*) observes, that as the number of their gods increased with their conquests, it is possible that they might have worshipped all the gods in the world. Their belief in tutelar deities produced that effect. Titus Livius mentions a sect of Bacchanals that spread through Italy. They performed their ceremonies during night, men and women mixing in the dark after intemperate eating and drinking. Never did wicked wretches deserve more exemplary punishment; yet listen to the following decree of the Roman senate, breathing the true spirit of toleration. “ Ne qua Bacchanalia Romæ, neve in Italia essent. Si quis tale sacrum, solenne, et necessarium duceret, nec sine religione et piaculo se id omittere posse; apud prætorem urbanum profiteretur; prætor senatum consuleret. Si ei permissum esset, quum in senatu centum non minus essent; ita id sacrum faceret, dum ne plus quinque sacrificio interessent; neu qua pecunia communis, neu quis magister sacrorum, aut sacerdos esset*.” The Jews however were prone to persecution;

(*a*) Morinus.

* “ Let there be no Bacchanalian ceremonies performed in the city, nor within Italy. If there be any person who reckons it a matter of conscience to perform

persecution ; for though they considered the Supreme Being as their tutelar deity, yet the malignity of their nature prevailed to make them hold in abhorrence the worship of every other god. Even among themselves, they were abundantly disposed to war ; and nothing kept within bounds the Pharisees, the Sadduces, and the Essenes, their three sects, but terror of the Roman power. The Christian religion implies toleration in its very nature and principles ; but being corrupted by ignorance, interest, and superstition, it became prone to persecution, above all others. Christian sects were enflamed against each other to a degree of brutality ; the most opposite to peace and brotherly love, inculcated in the gospel. It was propagated by the orthodox, that Arius expired in a common jakes, and that his entrails burst out. The same is related of Huneric King of the Vandals, a zealous Arian ; with the following addition, that being possessed with the devil, whom he had glutted with the blood of many martyrs, he tore his flesh off with his teeth, and ended his wretched life in the most excruciating, though justly deserved, torments. The falsehoods every where spread during the fourteenth century against the Jews, such as their poisoning the public fountains, killing Christian

“ perform these rites, and that he ought not to
 “ omit them, let him state his opinion to the city-
 “ prætor, who shall thereupon consult the senate. If
 “ liberty be granted him by the senate when no fewer
 “ than a hundred senators are present, let him per-
 “ form the sacrifice, but privately, in presence of no
 “ greater number than five persons. Let there be no
 “ public fund for them, nor any who shall preside as
 “ priest or master of the rites.”

infants,

infants, and drinking their blood, with many other falsehoods of the same stamp, were invented and greedily swallowed through the influence of religious hatred. The greater part of persecutions have been occasioned in the same manner; for men are not so desperately wicked, as to approve of persecution, unless when blinded by intemperate zeal. The same religious hatred produced the assassination of the Duke of Guise, and of two Henrys, Kings of France; produced the gun-powder plot; and produced the most horrid deed that ever was perpetrated among men, the massacre of St. Bartholomew*.

No false principle in religion has shed more innocent, or rather virtuous blood, than that of persecuting heretics; *i. e.* those who differ in any article from the religion established by law. The doctrine of burning heretics, is in effect the professing to burn men highly virtuous; for they must be so in an eminent degree, who submit to be burnt alive, rather than be guilty even of dissimulation. The Mahometan practice of converting people by the sword, if not more rational, is at least more manly. Louis IX. of France, one of its best princes, would have been a greater blessing to his people, had he been less

* Monsieur de Tavannes, afterward Marechal of France, was a great partisan of the Queen-mother, and so active in the massacre, that with his own hand he murdered no fewer than seventeen Huguenots. Having on death-bed made a full confession of his sins, "What," said the priest, "not a word of St. Bartholomew? Of St. Bartholomew!" answered the penitent; "the service I did that memorable day to God and the church, is alone a sufficient atonement for all my transgressions."

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pious: he had an implacable aversion to heretics, against whom he thought it more proper to employ racks and gibbets, than argument and persuasion. Torquemada, that infernal inquisitor of Spain, brought into the inquisition, in the space of fourteen years, no fewer than 80,000 persons; of whom 6000 were condemned to the flames, and burnt alive with the greatest pomp and exultation. Of that vast number, there was perhaps not a single person, who was not more pure in religion, as well as in morals, than their outrageous persecutor. Hunter a young man about nineteen years of age, was one of the unhappy victims to the zeal of Queen Mary of England for Popery. Having been inadvertently betrayed by a priest to deny transubstantiation, he absconded, to keep out of harm's way. Bonner, that arch-hangman of Popery, threatened ruin to the father, if he did not deliver up the young man. Hunter, hearing of his father's danger, made his appearance; and was burnt alive, instead of being rewarded for his filial piety. A woman of Guernsey was brought to the stake, without regard to her big belly; which bursting by the torture, she was delivered in the midst of the flames. One of the guards snatched the infant from the fire: but the magistrate who attended the execution, ordered it to be thrown back; being resolved, he said, that nothing should survive which sprung from a parent so obstinately heretical. Father Paul (Council of Trent, book 5.) computes, that in the Netherlands alone, from the time that the edict of Charles V. was promulgated against the reformers, fifty thousand persons were hanged, beheaded, buried alive, or burnt, on account of religion. Some Faquirs, crazed with opium and fanaticism, have been known with poisoned daggers to fall upon
uncircum-

uncircumcised Europeans, and to put every one to death whom they could master. In the last century, a Faquir at Surate murdered, within the space of a minute, seventeen Dutch sailors with seventeen stabs of a dagger. We think with horror of human sacrifices among the ancient Pagans ; and yet we behold them every day among Christians, rendered still more horrid by the most atrocious torments that religious hatred can devise.

The great motive to such cruelties, is the superstitious and absurd notion, that heretics are God's enemies ; which makes it thought an acceptable service to God, not only to persecute them by fire and sword in this world, but to deliver them over to Satan in the world to come. Another circumstance enflames religious hatred ; which is, that neighbours are either intimate friends or bitter enemies. This holds with a slight variation in sects of the same religion : however minute their differences be, they cannot be intimate friends ; and therefore are bitter enemies : the nearer they approach to unison, if not entirely concordant, the greater in proportion is their mutual hatred. Such hatred, subduing the meek spirit of Christianity, is an additional cause for persecution. Blind zeal for what is believed to be the only true religion, never discovers error nor innocence in those who differ, but perverseness and criminal obstinacy. Two religions totally different, like two countries in opposite parts of the globe, produce no mutual enmity. At the siege of Constantinople by the Turks, ann. 1453, the Emperor, in order to procure assistance from the princes of the Latin church, ordered mass to be celebrated in one of his churches according to the form used in Rome. The people with great indignation protested, that

that they would rather see the Turks in their churches, than the hat of a cardinal.

The history of the Waldenses, tho' well known, cannot be too often repeated. In the twelfth century, a merchant of Lyons, named *Peter Valdo*, dissatisfied with the pomp and ceremonies of the Romish church, ill suited, in his opinion, to the humility of a Christian, retired to a desert in the high country of Provence, with several poor people his disciples. There he became their spiritual guide, instructing them in certain doctrines, the same that were afterward adopted by the Protestants. Their incessant labour subdued the barren soil, and prepared it for grain as well as for pasture. The rent which in time they were enabled to pay for land that afforded none originally, endeared them to their landlords. In 250 years, they multiplied to the number of 18,000, occupying thirty villages, beside hamlets, the work of their own hands. Priests they had none, nor any disputes about religion: neither had they occasion for a court of justice, as brotherly love did not suffer them to go to law: they worshipped God in their own plain way, and their innocence was secured by incessant labour. They had long enjoyed the sweets of peace and mutual affection, when the reformers of Germany and Geneva sent ministers among them; which unhappily laid them open to religious hatred, the most unrelenting of all furies. In the year 1540, the parliament of Provence condemned nineteen of them to be burnt for heresy, their trees to be rooted up, and their houses to be razed to the ground. The Waldenses, terrified at this sentence, applied in a body to Cardinal Sadolet, bishop of Carpentras; who received them kindly, and obtained from Francis I. of France, a pardon for the persons under sentence of death, on condition of abjur-

ing heresy. The matter lay over five years; when the parliament, irritated at them for persevering in their tenets, prevailed on the King to withdraw his pardon. The sentence was executed with great rigour; and the parliament, laying hold of that opportunity, broke through every restraint of law, and commenced a violent persecution against the whole nation. The soldiers began with massacring old men, women, and children, all having fled who were able to fly; and proceeded to burn their houses, barns, and corn. There remained in the town of Cabriere sixty men and thirty women; who having surrendered upon promise of life, were butchered each of them without mercy. Some women who had taken refuge in a church, were dragged out, and burnt alive. Twenty-two villages were reduced to ashes; and that populous and flourishing district, became once more a desert.

To conceive this horrid scene in all its deformity, the people persecuted ought to be compared with the clergy their persecutors; for the civil magistrate was the hand only that executed their vengeance: on the one side, an industrious people, pure in their morals, and no less pure in their religion: on the other, proud pampered priests, abandoned without shame to every wickedness, impure in their morals, and still more impure in their religion—the world never furnished such another contrast. Had the scene been reversed, to make these wretches suffer persecution from the Waldenses—but that people were too upright and too religious for being persecutors. The manners of the Christian clergy in general, before the Reformation, enlivens the contrast. The doctrine promulgated during the dark times of Christianity, That God is a mercenary being; and that every person, however wicked, may obtain

tain pardon of his sins by money, made riches flow into the hands of ecclesiastics in a plentiful stream. And riches had the same effect upon the Christian clergy that they have upon all men, which is, to produce pride, sensuality, and profligacy : these again produced dissipation of money, which prompted avarice, and every invention for recruiting exhausted treasures*. Even as early as the eighth century, the Christian clergy, tempted by opulence, abandoned themselves to pleasure, without moderation ; and far exceeded the laity in luxury, gluttony, and lust. When such were the pastors, what must have been the flock ! Rejoice, O Scotland, over the poverty and temperance of thy pastors. During that period, the clergy could read, and, like parrots, they could mumble prayers in Latin : in every other respect, they rivalled the laity in ignorance. They were indeed more cunning than the laity ; and understood their interest better, if to covet riches at the expence of probity, deserve that name. Three articles were established that made religion an easy service. First, That faith is the essence of religion, without regard to good works ; and hence the necessity of being strictly orthodox, which the church only could determine. Second, Religious worship was reduced to a number of external ceremonies and forms, which, being declared sufficient for salvation, absolved Christians from every moral duty.

* In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many of the clergy dealt in merchandise ; and, being free of taxes, engrossed all. In the Netherlands particularly, there was a great cry, that monasteries were converted into shops and ware-houses, and the mansions of secular priests into tap-houses and inns.

Remark, that a priest is always the chief person in ceremonial worship. The third article, That God is a mercenary being, is mentioned above, with its necessary consequences. These articles brought about a total neglect, both in clergy and laity, not only of morality, but of every essential religious duty. In fine, there never was a religion that deviated more from just principles, than that professed by Christians during the dark ages. Persecution reached none but the sincerely pious and virtuous. What a glorious tolerating sentiment doth Arnobius (*a*) throw out, and what profusion of blood would have been prevented, had it been adopted by all Christians! “*Da veniam, Rex summe, tuos persequentibus famulos: et quod tuæ benignitatis est proprium, fugientibus ignosce tui nominis et religionis cultum. Non est mirum, si ignoraris: majoris est admirationis, si sciaris.**” The following parable against persecution was communicated to me by Dr. Franklin of Philadelphia, a man who makes a great figure in the learned world: and who would make a still greater figure for benevolence and candour, were virtue in this declining age as much regarded as knowledge. “*And it came to pass after these things, that Abraham sat in the door of his tent, about the going down of the sun. And behold a man bent with age, coming from the way of the wilder-*

(*a*) Lib. I. *Adversus Gentes.*

* “*Forgive, Almighty Power, the persecutors of thy servants; and, in the peculiar benevolence of thy nature, pardon those men whose unhappiness it is to be strangers to thy name and worship. Ignorant as they are of thee, we cannot wonder at the impiety of their actions.*”

“*nefs*

“ nefs leaning on a staff. And Abraham arose,
 “ and met him, and said unto him, Turn in, I
 “ pray thee, and wash thy feet, and tarry all
 “ night; and thou shalt arise early in the morn-
 “ ing, and go on thy way. And the man said,
 “ Nay; for I will abide under this tree. But
 “ Abraham pressed him greatly: so he turned,
 “ and they went into the tent: and Abraham
 “ baked unleavened bread, and they did eat.
 “ And when Abraham saw that the man blessed
 “ not God, he said unto him, Wherefore dost
 “ thou not worship the most high God, creator
 “ of heaven and earth? And the man answered
 “ and said, I do not worship thy God, neither
 “ do I call upon his name; for I have made to
 “ myself a God, which abideth always in mine
 “ house, and provideth me with all things. And
 “ Abraham’s zeal was kindled against the man,
 “ and he arose, and fell upon him, and drove
 “ him forth with blows into the wilderness. And
 “ God called unto Abraham, saying, Abraham,
 “ where is the stranger? And Abraham answer-
 “ ed and said, Lord, he would not worship thee,
 “ neither would he call upon thy name; there-
 “ fore have I driven him out from before my
 “ face into the wilderness. And God said, Have
 “ I borne with him these hundred ninety and
 “ eight years, and nourished him; and clothed
 “ him, notwithstanding his rebellion against me;
 “ and couldst not thou, who art thyself a sinner,
 “ bear with him one night?” The historical
 style of the Old Testament is here finely imitat-
 ed; and the moral must strike every one who is
 not sunk in stupidity and superstition. Were it
 really a chapter of Genesis, one is apt to think,
 that persecution could never have shown a bare
 face among Jews or Christians. But alas! that
 is a vain thought. Such a passage in the Old

Testament, would avail as little against the rancorous passions of men, as the following passages in the New Testament, tho' persecution cannot be condemned in terms more explicit. " Him
 " that is weak in the faith, receive you, but
 " not to doubtful disputations. For one believ-
 " eth that he may eat all things : another, who
 " is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eat-
 " eth, despise him that eateth not ; and let not
 " him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.
 " Who art thou that judgest another man's ser-
 " vant ? to his own master he standeth or falleth.
 " One man esteemeth one day above another :
 " another esteemeth every day alike. Let eve-
 " ry man be fully persuaded in his own mind.
 " But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or
 " why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for
 " we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of
 " Christ, every one to give an account of him-
 " self to God. I know, that there is nothing
 " unclean of itself : but to him that esteemeth
 " any thing unclean, to him it is unclean. The
 " kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but
 " righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy
 " Ghost. Let us therefore follow after the
 " things which make for peace, and things
 " wherewith one may edify another (a)." Our
 Saviour himself declared against persecution in
 the most express terms. The Jews and Samari-
 tans were of the same religion ; but some trivial
 differences in the ceremonial part of worship,
 rendered them odious to each other. Our Savi-
 our being refused lodging in a village of Samaria,
 because he was travelling to Jerusalem, his disci-
 ples James and John said, " Lord, wilt thou that

(a) Epistle of Paul to the Romans, chap. 14.

“ we command fire to come down from heaven,
 “ and consume them, even as Elias did ?” But
 he rebuked them, and said, “ The Son of man
 “ is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save
 “ them (b).”

It gives me real concern, that even the hot fire
 of persecution, did not altogether purify our
 Reformed clergy from that satanical spirit. No
 sooner were the Dissenters settled in New Eng-
 land, where they fled to avoid persecution, than
 they set on foot a persecution against the Quakers,
 no less furious than what they themselves had
 suffered at home. Nor did the Reformed clergy
 in Scotland lose sight of that magisterial autho-
 rity, which had been assumed by their predeces-
 sors of the Romish church, on the ridiculous pre-
 text, of being ambassadors to men from Jesus
 Christ. Upon a representation, ann. 1646, from
 the commission of the kirk of Scotland, James
 Bell and Colin Campbell, bailies of Glasgow,
 were committed to prison by the parliament,
 merely for having said, that kirk-men meddled
 too much in civil matters. Could a despotic
 prince have exerted a more arbitrary act ? but
 the church was all-powerful in those days *.

(b) Luke, ix. 54.

* Toleration in religion, though obvious to com-
 mon understanding, was not however the production of
 reason, but of commerce. The advantage of tolera-
 tion for promoting commerce, was discovered long be-
 fore by the Portuguese. They were too zealous Ca-
 tholics to venture so bold a measure in Portugal;
 but it was permitted in Goa, and the inquisition in that
 town was confined to Roman Catholics.

I would do justice to every church, not excepting that of Rome ; and it is doing that church no more but justice to acknowledge, that the spirit of persecution was not more eminent in it, than zeal for making converts. The former is retiring out of the world ; and I wish it most profound rest, never again to revive. People begin to be ashamed of it, as of a garment long out of fashion. Let the other continue for amusement : it is innocent ; and if it do no good, it is not productive of so much harm.

The desire of making converts proceeds from two different causes. In superstitious zealots, it proceeds from an opinion, that all who differ from them are in the road to damnation : for which reason, there is a rage of making converts among Roman Catholics ; who, without ceremony, deliver over to the flames of hell, every person who is not of their communion. The other cause is more natural : every man thinks himself in the right, especially in matters of consequence ; and for that reason, he is happy to find others of his opinion (*a*). With respect to the first cause, I beg attention to the following considerations ; not with any hope of converting zealots, but to prevent, if possible, others from becoming such. In none of the works of God is variety more happily blended with uniformity, than in the formation of man. Uniformity prevails in the human face with respect to eyes, nose, mouth, and other capital parts : variety prevails in the expressions of these parts, serving to distinguish one person from another, without hazard of error. In like manner, the minds of men are uniform with respect to their passions and principles ; but the va-

(*a*) Elements of Criticism, vol. 2. p. 493. edit. 5.

rious tones and expressions of these, form different characters without end. A face destitute of a nose or of a mouth, is monstrous: a mind destitute of the moral sense, or of a sense of religion, is no less so. But variety of expression in different faces, is agreeable: because we relish variety; and a similar variety in the expressions or tones of passion, ought to be equally agreeable. Endless differences in temper, in taste, and in mental faculties, that of reason in particular, produce necessarily variety in sentiment and in opinion. Can God be displeased with such variety, when it is his own work? He requires no uniformity except with respect to an upright mind and clear conscience, which are indispensable. Here at the same time is discovered an illustrious final cause. Different countenances in the human race, not only distinguish one person from another, but promote society, by aiding us to chuse a friend, an associate, a partner for life. Differences in opinion and sentiment, have still more beneficial effects: they rouse the attention, give exercise to the understanding, and sharpen the reasoning faculty. With respect to religion in particular, perfect uniformity, which furnisheth no subject for thinking nor for reasoning, would produce languor in divine worship, and make us sink into cold indifference. How frantic then is the rage of making proselytes? Let every man enjoy his native liberty, of thinking as well as of acting; free to act as he pleases, provided he obey the rules of morality; equally free to think as he pleases, provided he obey the great God as his maker and master, and acknowledge the necessary connection of religion with morality. Strict uniformity in other matters, may be compared to a spring-day, calm and serene; neither so hot as to make us drop a garment,

ment, nor so cold as to require an addition ; no wind to ruffle, nor rain to make shelter necessary. We enjoy the sweet scene for a moment : we walk, we sit, we muse ;— but soon fall asleep. Agitation is the element of man, and the life of society. Let us not attempt to correct the works of God : the attempt will betray us into absurd errors. This doctrine cannot be better illustrated than by a conversation, reported by the Jesuit Tachard, between the king of Siam, and a French ambassador, who, in his master's name, urged that king to embrace the Christian religion. “ I am surprised,” said his Majesty of Siam, “ that the King of France, my good friend, “ should interest himself so warmly in what concerns God only. He hath given to his creatures different minds and different inclinations, “ which naturally lead them two differ in opinion. “ We admire variety in the material world : “ why not equally admire it in matters of religion ? Have we not then reason to believe, “ that God takes pleasure in all the different “ forms of worship ? Had it been the intention “ of God to produce uniformity in religion, he “ would have formed all men with the same “ mind.” Bernier introduces some Gentiles of Hindostan defending their religion much in the same manner : “ That they did not pretend their “ law to be universal ; that they did not hold “ ours to be false, as, for aught they knew, it “ might be a good law for us ; and that God “ probably made many roads to heaven.”

With respect to the other cause above mentioned, viz. the desire of putting people in the right road. To reason others into our religious principles, is natural ; but it is not always prudent. I wish my neighbour to be of my opinion, because I think my opinion right : but is there no danger

danger of undermining his religious principles, without establishing better in their stead? Ought I not to restrain my desire of making converts, when the attempt may possibly reduce them to abandon religion altogether, as a matter of utter uncertainty? If a man of clear understanding has by some unhappy means been led into error, that man may be set right by fair reasoning: but beware of endeavouring to convert people of low parts, who are indebted for their creed to parents, to education, or to example: it is safer to let them rest as they are.

At any rate, let us never attempt to gain proselytes by rewards nor by terror: what other effect can such motives produce, but dissimulation and lying, parents of every secret crime? The Empress of Russia uses a method for converting her Pagan subjects of Kamskatka, no less agreeable than effectual; which is, to exempt from taxes for ten years, such of them as profess the Christian religion. This practice may be political; but it tends not to advance religion, and is destructive of morality. Terror, on the other hand, may be equally effectual, but is not altogether so agreeable. The people of Kum, one of the Hebrides, were Papists till the beginning of the present century, when in one day they were all proselyted to the Protestant faith. Maclean of Coll, their chieftain, went to the island with a Protestant minister; and ordered all the inhabitants to appear on Sunday at public worship. They came, but refused to hear a Protestant minister. The chieftain reasoned with them: but finding that his reasonings made no impression, he laid hold of the most forward; and having made a deep impression on him with his cane, pushed him into the church. The rest followed like meek lambs; and from that day have continued

nued firm Protestants. The Protestantism of Rum is styled by their Popish neighbours, the faith of the *yellow sick*.

To apply rewards, terror, or any other means, for making proselytes, except fair reasoning, appears to me a strange perversion. Can God be pleased with such means, or can any rational man justify them? What then should move any one to put them in practice? I should be utterly at a loss to answer the question, but for a fact mentioned more than once above, that the rude and illiterate, judge by sight only, and not by reflection, which makes them lay weight on the external visible act, without thinking of intention, because it is not visible. In truth, the bulk of mankind rest upon the external profession of religion: they never dip into the heart, nor consider how that stands affected. What else is it but the external act merely, that moves the Romish missionaries to baptize the infants of savages even at the moment of expiring? which they prosecute with much pious ardour. Their zeal merits applause, but by no means their judgment. Can any rational person seriously believe, that the dipping a savage or an infant in water, will make either of them a Christian, or that the want of this ceremony will precipitate them into hell? The Lithuanians, before their conversion to Christianity worshipped serpents, every family entertaining one as a household god. Sigismundus, in his commentaries of Muscovy, reports the following incident. A converted Christian having persuaded a neighbour to follow his example, and in token of his conversion to kill his serpent, was surprised at his next visit, to find his convert in the deepest melancholy, bitterly lamenting that he had murdered his god, and that the most dreadful calamities would befall him. Was this person

person a Christian more than nominally ? At the end of the last century when Kempfer was in Japan, there remained but about fifty Japan Christians, who were locked up in prison for life. These poor people knew no more of the Christian religion, but the names only of our Saviour and of the Virgin Mary ; and yet so zealous Christians were they, as rather to die miserably in jail, than to renounce the name of Christ, and be set at liberty.

I cannot with satisfaction conclude this sketch, without congratulating my present countrymen of Britain, upon their knowledge of the intimate connection that true religion has with morality. May the importance of that connection, always at heart, excite us to govern every action of our lives by the united principles of morality and religion :— what a happy people would we be !

A P P E N D I X.

Sketches concerning SCOTLAND.

S K E T C H I.

SCOTCH ENTAILS considered in Moral
and Political views.

MAN is by nature a hoarding animal ; and to secure to men what they acquire by honest industry, the sense of property is made a branch of human nature (a). During the infancy of nations, when artificial wants are unknown, the hoarding appetite makes no figure. The use of money produced a great change in the human heart. Money having at command the goods of fortune, introduced inequality of rank, luxury, and artificial wants without end. No bounds are set to hoarding, where an appetite for artificial wants is indulged : love of money be-

(a) Book 1. sketch 3.

comes the ruling passion: it is coveted by many in order to be hoarded; and means are absurdly converted into an end.

The sense of property, weak among savages, ripens gradually till it arrives at maturity in polished nations. In every stage of the progress, some new power is added to property; and now for centuries, men have enjoyed every power over their own goods, that a rational mind can desire (*a*): they have the free disposal during life; and even after death by naming an heir. These powers are sufficient for accomplishing every rational purpose: they are sufficient for commerce, and they are sufficient for benevolence. But the artificial wants of men are boundless: not content with the full enjoyment of their property during life, nor with the prospect of its being enjoyed by a favourite heir, they are anxiously bent to preserve it to themselves for ever. A man who has amassed a great estate in land, is miserable at the prospect of being obliged to quit his hold: to sooth his diseased fancy, he makes a deed securing it for ever to certain heirs; who must without end bear his name, and preserve his estate entire. Death, it is true, must at last separate him from his idol: it is some consolation, however, that his will governs and gives law to every subsequent proprietor. How repugnant to the frail state of man, are such swollen conceptions! Upon these however are founded entails, which have prevailed in many parts of the world, and unhappily at this day infest Scotland. Did entails produce no other harm but the gratification of a distempered appetite for property, they might be endured, though far

(*a*) Historical law tracts, tract 3.

from deserving approbation : but, like other transgressions of nature and reason, they are productive of much mischief, not only to commerce, but to the very heirs for whose benefit it is pretended that they are made.

Considering that the law of nature has bestowed on man, every power of property that is necessary either for commerce or for benevolence, how blind was it in the English legislature to add a most irrational power, that of making an entail ! But men will always be mending ; and when a law-giver ventures to tamper with the laws of nature, he hazards much mischief. We have a pregnant instance above, of an attempt to mend the laws of God, in many absurd regulations for the poor ; and that the law authorising entails, is another instance of the same kind, will be evident from what follows.

The mischievous effects of English entails were soon discovered : they occasioned such injustice and oppression, that even the judges ventured to relieve the nations from them, by an artificial form, termed, *fine and recovery*. And yet, though no moderate man would desire more power over his estate than he has by common law, the legislature of Scotland enabled every land-proprietor to fetter his estate for ever ; to tyrannize over his heirs ; and to reduce their property to a shadow, by prohibiting alienation ; and by prohibiting the contracting debt, were it even to redeem the proprietor from death or slavery. Thus many a man, sonder of his estate than of his wife and children, grudges the use of it to his natural heirs, reducing them to the state of mere life-renters. Behold the consequences. A number of noblemen and gentlemen among us, lie in wait for every parcel of land that comes to market. Intent upon aggrandizing their family,

most

or

or rather their estate, which is the favourite object, they secure every purchase by an entail ; and the same course will be followed, till no land be left to be purchased. Thus every entailed estate in Scotland becomes in effect a mortmain, admitting additions without end, but absolutely barring any alienation ; and if the legislature interpose not, the period is not distant, when all the land in Scotland will be locked up by entails, and withdrawn from commerce.

The purpose of the present essay, is to set before our legislature, coolly and impartially, the destructive effects of a Scotch entail. I am not so sanguine as to hope, that men, who convert means into an end, and avariciously covet land for its own sake, will be prevailed upon to regard, either the interest of their country or of their posterity : but I would gladly hope, that the legislature may be roused to give attention to a national object of no slight importance.

I begin with effects of a private or domestic nature. To the possessor, an entail is a constant source of discontent, by subverting that liberty and independence, which all men covet, with respect to their goods as well as their persons. What can be more vexatious to a proprietor of a great land-estate, than to be barred from the most laudable acts, suitable provisions for example to a wife or children ? not to mention numberless acts of benevolence, that endear individuals to each other, and make society comfortable. Were he ever so industrious, his fields must lie waste ; for what man will lay out his own money upon an estate that is not his own ? A great proportion of the land in Scotland is in such a state, that by laying out a thousand pounds or so, an intelligent proprietor may add a hundred pounds yearly to his rent-roll. But an entail effectually

fectually bars that improvement : it affords the proprietor no credit ; and supposing him to have the command of money independent of the estate, he will be ill-fated if he have not means to employ it more profitably for his own interest. An entail, at the same time, is no better than a trap for an improvident possessor : to avoid altogether the contracting debt, is impracticable ; and if a young man be guided more by pleasure than by prudence, which commonly is the case of young men ; a vigilant and rapacious substitute, taking advantage of a forfeiting clause, turns him out of possession, and delivers him over to want and misery.

But an entail is productive of consequences still more dismal, even with respect to heirs. A young man upon whom the family estate is entailed, without any power reserved to the father, is not commonly obsequious to advice, nor patiently submissive to the fatigues of education : he abandons himself to pleasure, and indulges his passions without control. In one word, there is no situation more subversive of morals, than that of a young man, bred up from infancy in the certainty of inheriting an opulent fortune.

The condition of the other children, daughters especially, is commonly deplorable. The proprietor of a large entailed estate, leaves at his death children who have acquired a taste for sumptuous living. The sons drop off one by one, and a number of daughters remain, with a scanty provision, or perhaps with none at all. A collateral male heir succeeds, who after a painful search is discovered in some remote corner, qualified to procure bread by the spade or the plough, but entirely unqualified for behaving as master of an opulent fortune. By such a metamorphosis,
the

the poor man makes a ludicrous figure ; while the daughters, reduced to indigence, are in a situation much more lamentable than are the brats of beggars.

Our entails produce another domestic evil, for which no proper remedy is provided. The sums permitted in most entails to younger children, however adequate when the entail is made, become in time too scanty, by a fall in the value of money, and by increase of luxury ; which is peculiarly hard upon daughters of great families : the provisions destined for them will not afford them bread ; and they cannot hope to be suitably matched, without a decent fortune. If we adhere to entails, nunneries ought to be provided.

But the domestic evils of an entail make no figure compared with those that respect the public. These in their full extent would fill a volume : they are well known ; and it may be sufficient to keep them in view by some general hints.

As observed above, few tenants in tail can command money for improvements, however profitable. Such discouragement to agriculture, hurtful to proprietors of entailed estates, is still more so to the public. It is now an established maxim, That a state is powerful in proportion to the product of its land : a nation that feeds its neighbours, can starve them. The quantity of land that is locked up in Scotland by entails, has damped the growing spirit of agriculture. There is not produced sufficiency of corn at home for our own consumption : and our condition will become worse and worse by new entails, till agriculture and industry be annihilated. Were the great entailed estates in Scotland, split into small properties of fifty or a hundred pounds yearly rent,

rent, we should soon be enabled, not only to supply our own markets, but to spare for our neighbours.

In the next place, our entails are no less subversive of commerce than of agriculture. There are numberless land-estates in Scotland of one, two, or three hundred pounds yearly rent. Such an estate cannot afford bare necessaries to the proprietor, if he pretend to live like a gentleman. But he has an excellent resource: let him apply to any branch of trade, his estate will afford him credit for what money he wants. The profit he makes, pays the interest of the money borrowed, with a surplus; and this surplus, added to the rent of his estate, enables him to live comfortably. A number of land-proprietors in such circumstances, would advance commerce to a great height. But alas! there are not many who have that resource: such is the itch in Scotland for entail, as even to descend lower than one hundred pounds yearly. Can one behold with patience, the countenance that is given to selfish wrong-headed people, acting in direct opposition to the prosperity of their country? Commerce is no less hurt in another respect: when our land is withdrawn from commerce by entails, every prosperous trader will desert a country where he can find no land to purchase; for to raise a family by acquiring an estate in land, is the ultimate aim of every merchant, and of every man who accumulates money.

Thirdly, An entail is a bitter enemy to population. Population is generally proportioned to the number of land-proprietors. A very small portion of land, managed with skill and industry, affords bread to a numerous family; and the great aim of the frugal proprietor, is to provide
a fund

a fund for educating his children, and for establishing them in business. A numerous issue, at the same time, is commonly the lot of the temperate and frugal; because they are strangers to luxury and voluptuousness, which enervate the body, and dry up the sources of procreation. This is no chimera or fond imagination: traverse Europe; compare great capitals with distant provinces; and it will be found to hold universally, that children abound much more among the industrious poor, than among the luxurious rich. But if division of land into small properties, tend to population; depopulation must be the necessary consequence of an entail, the avowed intent of which is to unite many small properties in one great estate; and consequently, to reduce land-proprietors to a small number.

Let us, in the fourth place, take under consideration, the children of land-holders with respect to education and industry; for unless men be usefully employed, population is of no real advantage to a state. In that respect, great and small estates admit no comparison. Children of great families, accustomed to affluence and luxury, are too proud for business; and were they even willing, are incapable to drudge at a laborious employment. At the same time, as the father's hands are tied up by his entail from affording them means to subsist as persons of rank, they become a burden on the family, and on the state, and can do no service to either, but by dying. Yet there are men so blind, or so callous, as to be fond of entails. Let us try whether a more pleasing scene will have any effect upon them. Children of small land-holders, are from infancy educated in a frugal manner; and they must be industrious, as they depend on industry
for

for bread. Among that class of men, education has its most powerful influence ; and upon that class a nation chiefly relies, for its skilful artists and manufacturers, for its lawyers, physicians, divines, and even for its generals and statesmen.

And this leads to consider, in the fifth place, the influence that great and small estates have on manners. Gentlemen of a moderate fortune, connected with their superiors and inferiors, improve society, by spreading kindly affection through the whole members of the state. In such only resides the genuine spirit of liberty, abhorrence equally of servility to superiors and of tyranny to inferiors. The nature of the British government, creates a mutual dependence of the great and small on each other. The great have favours to bestow : the small have many more, by their privilege of electing parliament-men ; which obliges men of high rank to affect popularity, if they have none at heart. This connection produces good manners at least between different ranks, and perhaps some degree of cordiality. Accumulation of land into great estates, produces opposite manners : when all the land in Scotland is swallowed up by a number of grantees, and few gentlemen of the middle rank are left ; even the appearance of popularity will vanish, leaving pride and insolence on the one hand, and abject servility on the other. In a word, the distribution of land into many shares, accords charmingly with the free spirit of the British constitution ; but nothing is more repugnant to that spirit, than overgrown estates in land.

In the sixth place, Arts and sciences can never flourish in a country, where all the land is engrossed by a few men. Science will never be cultivated by the dispirited tenant, who can scarce procure

procure bread ; and still less, if possible, by the insolent landlord, who is too self-sufficient for instruction. There will be no encouragement for arts : great and opulent proprietors, fostering ambitious views, will cling to the seat of government, which is far removed from Scotland ; and if vanity make them sometimes display their grandeur at their country-seats, they will be too delicate for any articles of luxury but what are foreign. The arts and sciences being thus banished, Scotland will be deserted by every man of spirit who can find bread elsewhere.

In the seventh place, Such overgrown estates will produce an irregular and dangerous influence with respect to the House of Commons. The parliament-boroughs will be subdued by weight of money ; and with respect to county-elections, it is a chance if there be left in a county as many land-holders capable to elect, and to be elected, as even to afford a choice. In such circumstances, will our constitution be in no danger, from the ambitious views of men elevated above others by their vast possessions ? Is it unlikely, that such men, taking advantage of public discord, will become an united body of ambitious oppressors, overawing their sovereign as well as their fellow-subjects ? Such was the miserable condition of Britain, while the feudal oligarchy subsisted : such at present is the miserable condition of Poland : and such will be the miserable condition of Scotland, if the legislature afford not a remedy.

If the public interest only were to be regarded, the axe ought to be applied, cutting down entails to the very root : but a numberless body of substitutes are interested, many of whom would be disinherited, if the tenants in tail had power.

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To reconcile as much as possible these opposite interests, it is proposed, that the following articles be authorised by a statute. First, That the act of parliament 1685 be repealed with respect to all future operations. Second, That entails already made and completed, shall continue effectual to such substitutes as exist at the date of the act proposed; but shall not benefit any substitute born after it. Third, That power be reserved to every proprietor, after the act 1685 is at an end, to settle his estate upon what heirs he thinks proper, and to bar these heirs from altering the order of succession; these powers being inherent in property at common law.

At the same time, the prohibiting entails will avail little, if trust-deeds be permitted in their utmost extent, as in England. And therefore, in order to re-establish the law of nature with respect to land-property, a limitation of trust-deeds is necessary. My proposal is, That no trust-deed, directing or limiting the succession of heirs to a land-estate, shall be effectual beyond the life of the heirs in existence at the time.

S K E T C H

S K E T C H II.

Government of ROYAL BOROUGHS in Scotland.

BY a royal borough is in Scotland understood an incorporation that hold their lands of the crown, and are governed by magistrates of their own naming. The administration of the annual revenues of a royal borough, termed the *common good*, is trusted to the magistrates; but not without control. It was originally subjected to the review of the Great Chamberlain; and accordingly the chap. 39. § 45. of the *Iter Camerarii*, contains the following articles, recommended to the Chamberlain to be enquired into. “ Giff
 “ there be an good assedation and uptaking of
 “ the common good of the burgh, and giff faith-
 “ ful compt be made thereof to the community
 “ of the burgh; and giff no compt is made, he
 “ whom and in quhaes hands it is come, and
 “ how it passess by the community.” In pursuance of these instructions, the Chamberlain’s precept for holding the ayr, or circuit, is directed to the provost and bailies, enjoining them,
 “ to call all those who have received any of the
 “ town’s revenues, or used any office within the
 VOL. IV. O “ burgh,

“ burgh, since the last chamberlain-ayr, to answer such things as shall be laid to their charge.” *Iter Camer. cap. 1.* And in the third chapter, which contains the forms of the chamberlain-ayr, the first thing to be done after fencing the court, is, to call the bailies and serjeants to be challenged and accused from the time of the last ayr.

This office, dangerous by excess of power, being suppressed, the royal boroughs were left in a state of anarchy. The magistracy, being now no longer under any check or control, was coveted by noblemen and gentlemen in the neighbourhood; who, under the name of office-bearers, laid their hands on the revenues of the borough, and converted all to their own profit. This corruption was heavily complained of in the reign of James V.; and a remedy was provided by act 26. parl. 1535, enacting, 1st, That none be qualified to be provost, bailie, or alderman, but an indwelling burghess. 2dly, “ That no inhabitant purchase lordship out of burgh, to the terror of his comburghesses. And, 3dly, That all provosts, bailies, and aldermen of boroughs, bring yearly to the chequer at a day certain, the compt-books of their common good, to be seen and considered by the Lords Auditors, giff the same be spent for the common well of the burgh, or not, under the penalty of losing their freedom. And that the said provosts, bailies, and aldermen, warn yearly, fifteen days before their coming to the chequer, all those who are willing to come for examining the said accounts, that they may impugn the same, in order that all murmur may cease in that behalf.” And to enforce these regulations, a brieve was issued from the chancery, commanding the magistrates to present their
their

their accounts to the exchequer, and summoning the burgesſes to appear and object to the ſame.

A defect in this ſtatute made it leſs effectual than it was intended to be. Magiſtrates, to avoid the penalty, brought the count-books of their common good to the exchequer; but they brought no rental of the common good to found a charge againſt them. This defect was remedied by act 28. parl. 1693, containing the following preamble. “ That the royal boroughs, by
 “ the male-adminiſtration of their magiſtrates,
 “ have fallen under great debts and burdens, to
 “ the diminution of their dignity, and the diſa-
 “ bling of them to ſerve the crown and govern-
 “ ment as they ought; and that the care, over-
 “ ſight, and control of the common good of bo-
 “ roughs, belong to their Majeſties by virtue of
 “ their prerogative-royal; therefore, for pre-
 “ venting the like abuſes and miſapplications in
 “ all time thereafter, their Majeſties ſtatute and
 “ ordain, That every burgh-royal, ſhall, be-
 “ twixt this and the firſt of November next, bring
 “ to the Lords of Treafury and Exchequer, an
 “ exact account of charge and diſcharge, ſub-
 “ ſcribed by the magiſtrates and town-clerk, of
 “ their whole public-good and revenues, and of
 “ the whole debts and incumbrances that affect
 “ the ſame.” This completed the remedy, by putting means into the hands of the Barons of Exchequer, to control the accounts enjoined by the former ſtatute to be yearly given in.

The foregoing regulations are kept in obſervance. Every year a precept iſſues from the exchequer, ſigned by one of the Barons, addreſſed to the director of the chancery, requiring him to make out a brieve for every royal borough. The brieve is accordingly made out, returned to the

exchequer, and sent to the several sheriffs, to be served in all the royal boroughs within their bounds, as directed by the statute. These brieves are accordingly so served by the sheriffs; and particularly it is a constant form in most of the royal boroughs, to issue a proclamation, fifteen days before the day named for appearance in exchequer, warning the inhabitants to repair there, in order to object to the public accounts of the town: and further, in order to give them opportunity to frame objections, the book and accounts are laid open for these fifteen days, to be inspected by all the inhabitants.

We learn from the records of exchequer, that from the year 1660 to the year 1683, accounts were regularly given in to exchequer, in obedience to the statute. The town of Edinburgh only having failed for some short time, Captain Thomas Hamilton merchant there, by an action in exchequer, compelled the magistrates to produce upon oath their treasurer's accounts, which were accordingly audited. And we also learn, that from the Restoration down to the Union, a clerk to the borough-roll was appointed by the crown, whose proper business it was to examine and audite the accounts of the boroughs.

Notwithstanding the foregoing salutary regulations, and the form constantly practised to make them effectual, the boroughs of late years have forborn to present their accounts in exchequer; hoping that they would be overlooked by the English court of exchequer, established in Scotland after the Union; which accordingly happened. This neglect in the court of exchequer is greatly to be regretted, because it reduces the royal boroughs, by the male-administration of their magistrates, to the same miserable condition that

that is so loudly complained of in the statutes above mentioned. It is undoubtedly in the power of the Barons to restore good government to the boroughs, by compelling the magistrates to account yearly in the court of exchequer, according to the foregoing regulations. And to that end no more is necessary, but to signify publicly that they are resolved hereafter to put these regulations in execution.

How beneficial that step would be to this country in general, and to the royal boroughs in particular, will appear from considering, first, the unhappy consequences that result from suffering magistrates to dispose of the town's revenues, without any check or control; and next the good effects that must result from a regular and careful management, under the inspection of the King's judges.

The unhappy consequences of leaving magistrates without any check or control, are too visible to be disguised. The revenues of a royal borough are seldom laid out for the good of the town, but in making friends to the knot who are in possession of the magistracy; and in rioting and drunkenness, for which every pretext is laid hold of, particularly that of hospitality to strangers. Such mismanagement tends to idleness, and corruption of manners; which accordingly are remarkable in most royal boroughs. Nor is the contagion confined within the town: it commonly spreads all around.

Another consequence, no less fatal, of leaving magistrates to act without control, is a strong desire in every licentious burgher, of stepping into the magistracy, for his own sake, and for that of his friends. Hence the factions and animosities that prevail in almost all the royal boroughs;

which are violently and indecently pursued, without the least regard to the good of the community.

The greatest evil of all, respects the choice of their representatives in parliament. A habit of riot and intemperance, makes them fit subjects to be corrupted, by every adventurer who is willing to lay out money for purchasing a seat in parliament. Hence the infamous practice of bribery at elections, which tends not only to corrupt the whole mass of the people, but, which is still more dreadful, tends to fill the House of Commons with men of dissolute manners, void of probity and honour.

But turning from scenes so dismal, let us view the beautiful effects that result, from an administration regularly carried on, as directed by the statutes above mentioned. The revenues of the royal boroughs are supposed to be above L. 40,000 yearly. And were this sum, or the half of it, prudently expended, for promoting arts and industry among the numerous inhabitants of royal boroughs, the benefit, in a country so narrow and poor as Scotland, would be immense: it would tend to population, it would greatly increase industry, manufactures, and commerce, beside augmenting the public revenue. In the next place, as there would be no temptation for designing men to convert the burden of magistracy into a benefit, faction and discord would vanish; and there would be no less solicitude to shun the burden, than at present is seen to obtain it. None would submit to the burden but the truly patriotic, men who would cheerfully bestow their time, and perhaps their money, upon the public; and whose ambition it would be to acquire a character,

character, by promoting industry, temperance, and honesty, among their fellow-citizens.

And when the government of the royal boroughs comes to be in so good hands, bribery, which corrupts the very vitals of our constitution, will be banished of course. And considering the proper and constitutional dependence of the royal boroughs upon the king's judges, we may have reasonable assurance, that few representatives will be chosen, but who are friends to their country and to their sovereign.

SKETCH

S K E T C H III.

Plan for improving and preserving in order the
HIGHWAYS in Scotland.

P R E F A C E.

Highways have in Scotland become a capital object of police, by the increase of inland commerce, upon which bad roads are a heavy tax. Happily for our country, no person is ignorant of this truth; and we see with pleasure the fruits of their conviction in various attempts, publick and private, to establish this valuable branch of police upon the best footing. As this will be found no easy task, it may reasonably be hoped, that men of genius will seriously apply themselves to it, and in general that every person will freely produce such hints as occur to them. In the latter view the following plan is offered to the public: and if, from the various proposals that have been or shall be published, an effective plan can be framed, such as completely to answer its purpose, it may safely be pronounced, that it will produce more benefit to this country, than has been produced by any other single improvement since the union of the two kingdoms.

1. **T**HE justices of peace, commissioners of supply, the sheriff or steward depute, and the first magistrate of royal boroughs, shall be commissioners for making and repairing highways, bridges, and ferries, in the several shires and stewartries. All the powers given by law to the justices of peace, and commissioners of supply, with respect to highways, bridges, and ferries, shall be transferred to them; and any two shall be a quorum, except where a greater number is required by this act.

2. The sheriff or steward depute shall appoint the first day of meeting of the said commissioners, as soon as may conveniently be after the date of the act, by an intimation at each parish-church upon a Sunday at the close of the forenoon-service. And the last Tuesday of March shall yearly thereafter be a day of meeting at the head borough of the shire or stewartry, in place of the first or third Tuesday of May appointed by former acts. The commissioners shall appoint a preses, convener, and clerk: and they shall be empowered to adjourn themselves from time to time.

3. The commissioners, at their first meeting, shall set about a division of the shire or stewartry into two or more districts, as they see convenient. And if they cannot overtake this work at that meeting, they shall appoint proper persons to form a plan of the intended divisions, which plan shall be reported to the commissioners at their next meeting, in order to be approved or altered by them. This being settled, the commissioners shall appoint the heritors in these several districts, or any three of them, to meet on a certain day and place, to make lists of the whole publick roads

roads within their respective districts, and to settle the order of reparation, beginning with those that are the most frequented. The proceedings of these district-meetings must be reported to the commissioners, at their next meeting; who are empowered to settle the order of reparation, in case of variance among the heritors; and also to add any road that may have been omitted. And they shall record a scheme or plan of the whole roads in the shire, thus enlisted, with their resolutions thereupon, to be seen in the clerk's hands *gratis*. But upon any just cause appearing in the course of administration, the commissioners shall be empowered to alter or vary this plan, provided it be at a meeting previously appointed for that purpose, and where three fifths at least of the commissioners are present.

4. If the sheriff or steward neglect to appoint the first meeting of the commissioners, he shall incur a penalty of L. 100, upon a summary complaint to the court of session by any one heritor of the shire; with costs of suit, the one half to the plaintiff, and the other half to be applied by the commissioners for the purposes of this act. If the commissioners fail to meet at the day appointed by the sheriff or steward, or fail to divide the shire or stewartry into districts, within six months of their first meeting, the sheriff or steward depute, under the foresaid penalty, shall be bound to do that work himself; and also to appoint the heritors in the several districts, or any three of them, to make lists of the public roads as above mentioned, and to report their resolutions to him; and he is empowered to settle the order of reparation, in case of variance among the heritors. If the heritors fail to meet, and to make

make a list of the roads as aforesaid, this work shall be performed by the sheriff or steward depute himself. And he shall be indemnified of whatever expences he is at in prosecuting the said work, out of the sums that are to be levied by authority of this act, in manner after mentioned, with an additional sum for his own trouble, to be named by the circuit-judges.

5. No person shall act as a commissioner upon this statute, but who has an estate within the county of L. 200 Scots valuation, or is heir-presumptive to such an estate, or is named a commissioner *virtute officii*, under the penalty of L. 20 Sterling *toties quoties*, to be prosecuted before any competent court, by a popular action, with costs of suit; the one half to the plaintiff, the other half to the purposes of this act.

6. Whereas the sum of 10d. directed by the act 1669 to be imposed upon each L. 100 of valued rent, is insufficient for the purposes therein expressed; and whereas the six days statute-work for repairing the highways is in many respects inconvenient; therefore instead of the 10d. and instead of the statute-work, the commissioners, together with the heritors possessed of L. 200 Scots of valued rent, five, whether commissioners or heritors, making a quorum, shall annually, upon the said last Tuesday of March, assess each heritor in a sum not exceeding

upon each L. 100 valued rent; the assessment imposed on the heritors to be levied by the collector of supply, along with the cess, and by the same legal remedies. The heritors are entitled to relieve themselves of the one half of the said assessment, by laying the same upon their tenants, in proportion to their rents; an heritor being always considered as a tenant of the land he has in his natural possession.

7. With

7. With respect to boroughs of royalty, regality, and barony, and large trading villages, the commissioners are empowered to levy from each householder, a sum not exceeding 2 s. yearly, more or less in proportion to the assessment of the shire, to be paid within forty days after notice given, under the penalty of double, besides expence of process. Provided, that any of these householders who have country farms, by which they contribute to relieve their landlords as above mentioned, shall be exempted from this part of the assessment.

8. If the commissioners and heritors neglect to assess their shire, or name so small a sum as to be an elusory assessment, insufficient to answer the purposes of this act, the court of judicatory, or the circuit judges, are in that case empowered and required to lay on the highest assessment that is made lawful by this act. In case of a total omission, the commissioners and heritors who, by neglecting to convene without a good cause of absence, have occasioned the said omission, shall be subjected each of them to a penalty of L. 20 Sterling. And to make these penalties effectual, the trustees for fisheries and manufactures are appointed to sue for the same before the court of session, and to apply the same, when recovered, to any useful purpose within the shire, especially to the purposes of this act. And to preserve the said fines entire for the public service, the trustees shall be entitled to costs of suit.

9. The sums levied as aforesaid shall be laid out annually upon the highways, bridges, and ferries, for making, repairing, or improving the same; proceeding regularly with the reparation according to the scheme or plan ordered as above to be settled in each shire and stewartry.

10. With

10. With respect to roads that are not the first in order, and for which there is no interim provision by this act during reparation of the more frequented roads, the commissioners are impowered to exact from cottars and day-labourers their statute-work according to the acts presently in force, to be applied to those secondary roads. The statute-work is not to be demanded unless for this purpose; and is to cease totally after the highways have, by means of the present act, been once totally repaired.

11. The commissioners and heritors, at all their meetings, shall bear their own charges.

12. The clause in the act 1661, empowering heritors, at the sight of the sheriff, to cast about highways for their convenience, shall be repealed; and it shall be declared unlawful, in time coming, to turn about or change any highway, unless for the benefit of the public, as by shortening it, carrying it through firmer ground, or making it more level; and to that purpose the commissioners shall be impowered to turn about highways, as also to widen the same, not exceeding thirty feet, free of ditches. But the commissioners shall have no power to carry a road through any house, garden, orchard, or pleasure-ground.

13. The commissioners shall have power to take from the adjacent lands, stones, sand, gravel, or other materials for making the highways, paying always for the damage done.

14. With respect to high-roads which bound the properties of neighbouring heritors, and which it may be found necessary to alter or widen, the commissioners shall be empowered to adjudge to one heritor any small bits of ground cut off from the other by the road so altered; and

and if land cannot be given for land, to make a compensation in money, valuing the land at the current price of the country.

15. In order to prevent water stagnating on the highways, the commissioners shall be impowered to make ditches or drains through neighbouring grounds; and such ditches or drains shall be preserved entire by the proprietors of the land, or at their charges.

16. As the aforesaid assessment, after repairing the highways, may not be sufficient for building bridges, or making ferries, where rivers are large; any five of the commissioners may, for building bridges, or making ferries, establish a pontage or toll; so much for horses, so much for horned cattle, and so much for sheep, and the double for each beast in a wheel-carriage. Upon the credit of the toll the said commissioners may borrow money, to be employed wholly upon the bridge or ferry where the toll is gathered. But before borrowing the money, an estimate must be made of the expence of the work. After the work is finished, the sum bestowed on it must be ascertained: an accurate account must be kept of the gradual payment of this sum by the toll; and when it is completely paid, the commissioners must declare the bridge or ferry to be free.

17. The determinations of the commissioners shall be final, unless complained of in manner following.

18. If any heritor apprehend that undue preference is given to a certain highway, or conceive himself aggrieved by an order or sentence of the commissioners, it shall be lawful for him, within forty days of the act complained of, to enter a complaint in the court of session; and the judgment

judgment upon such complaint shall be final. But such complaint shall only be effectual for damages, and shall not stay execution of the work. At the same time, no complaint shall be admitted till security be given to pay full costs, in case the plaintiff be found in the wrong.

19. Former laws concerning highways, bridges, or ferries, to continue in force, unless as far as altered by this act.

20. An annual state of what is done by virtue of this act, made up by the commissioners, or their clerk, shall, before the last Tuesday of March, be laid before the trustees for fisheries and manufactures, in order to be made a part of their annual report to the King; and these trustees shall direct proper persons to inspect what work is done upon the high-roads, and in what manner. Upon any misapplication or embezzlement of the money levied, any neglect in levying, or any wrong done to the public, contrary to the intention of this act, the trustees are required to set on foot and prosecute what redress is competent in law or equity, provided the prosecution be commenced within a year after the offence.

Query, Ought not broad wheels to be required?

CONSIDERATIONS on the preceding
PLAN.

THE laws in Scotland relating to this branch of public police, are numerous ; some enacted while Scotland was a separate kingdom, some after its union with England. It is not the purpose of this paper to enter into a detail of the various regulations established by these laws : they are generally known ; and in the late abridgment of our statute-law, they are all recapitulated with brevity and precision. It shall suffice cursorily to observe, that the acts made during the reign of Charles II. form the ground-work of our regulations concerning highways : the latter acts are little more than explanatory of the former.

It seems to have been the plan of the legislature, that highways should be repaired by those who are employed in husbandry ; and accordingly, the six days annual labour is, in the statutes of Charles II. imposed upon them only.

This was a measure not ill suited to the state of Scotland at that period. During the last century, we had little inland commerce to require

quire good roads, except that of corn carried to market; and for that reason, it was natural to impose upon husbandmen the burden of repairing highways. These persons, at the same time, passing the whole summer in idleness, unless when called to perform personal services to capricious and unfeeling landlords, could not think it a hardship to have some part of their time employed in serving themselves instead of their landlords.

That annual labour upon highways, limited to a few days, should be required from men in that condition, appears not unjust. And why may we not suppose the legislature at that time capable of such enlarged views, as to prefer this method for repairing highways, in order to bring on gradually a habit of labour and industry? But the condition of Scotland at present differs widely from what it was in the reign of Charles II.; and the regulations for repairing highways which were then proper, have, by alteration of circumstances, become both unjust and inexpedient.

Unjust they have become in a high degree. Inland commerce, which begins to flourish in Scotland, is greatly promoted by good roads; and every dealer, and indeed every traveller, profits by them. But no men are less interested in good roads than day-labourers, or those who are commonly called *cottars*; and yet these chiefly are burdened with the reparation. Such men, at the same time having commonly many children, find it difficult to support their families, even with their utmost industry. Nothing can be more unjust, than to impose upon such men an annual tax of six days labour for repairing roads, the goodness of which

contributes little or nothing to their convenience.

Our present laws are inexpedient, as well as unjust. In the first place, a tax of this nature discourages the propagation of children, in which the strength of a state consists: the poor labourer ought to be encouraged with a reward, instead of being discouraged with a tax. In the next place, cottars called out to perform the statute-work, obey with reluctance, and trifle away time without doing any thing effectual. To enforce the law, and to compel such men to labour, is grievous to the gentlemen who are empowered to execute the law: they cannot punish with rigour or firmness, men who have so good reason to decline the service: they are soon disgusted with being taskmasters, and the generality desist altogether.

Laws concerning private property are always kept in observance, and they execute themselves, as is commonly expressed, because there are always a multitude of individuals strongly interested to have them executed. But in making public laws, the great difficulty has ever been, to lay down effectual measures for putting them in execution; and by what means to make such laws execute themselves, is one of the most intricate problems in politics. Our laws concerning highways, are eminently defective in that respect: and accordingly, though most of them have existed near a century, they never have at any period been executed to any extent. Take the following specimen, among many that may be urged, of this defect. Overseers are forced into service under a penalty, in order to compel

pel the peasants to perform faithfully their six-days labour. To hope any good from a reluctant overseer set over a set of reluctant labourers, is a fond conceit: it is much if his resentment tempt him not to encourage their idleness. In vain would we expect, that any overseer, without a suitable reward, will exert himself in promoting the work.

To remedy the hardship of laying the burden of reparation upon those who are least able and least benefited; and at the same time to make this remedy effectual, is the purpose of the foregoing plan. And upon considering the matter in its different views, the only method that promises success, appears to be a county-tax laid upon land according to the valuation; and a capitation-tax on the inhabitants of boroughs. These taxes relieve the labouring poor, and lay the burden where it ought to be laid: and the law will execute itself, if that effect can be hoped from any public law. Effectual measures are laid down for levying the tax: and, if once levied, there is no danger of its being allowed to lie unemployed in the hands of the collector; for every heritor will be anxious to have some part employed for his benefit. The danger will rather be of factious disputes about the distribution. This danger also is attempted to be prevented; and, it is hoped, with success.

Some narrow-minded persons may possibly grudge a tax, that loads the present generation for the advantage of those who come after: but is it rational to grudge, that others should benefit by measures evidently calculated for advancing our own interest? Let us suppose, that the heritors of a shire were to concert measures

measures in common, for improving their lands: to make good roads would be one effectual measure; for supposing the reparation to cost L. 5000, their estates would be bettered double that sum.

To conclude: It is not to be expected that any regulations concerning highways, or concerning any branch of police, can be so framed as to please every individual. Wise men are practicable men, to use an expression of Lord Bacon, and will make concessions in order to promote a general good, if without such concessions it cannot be obtained. Better far to have a good law, though in our opinion defective in some articles, than to have no law at all, or, which is worse, a law eminently defective, unjust, and inexpedient.



F I N I S.

